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Geo. Putnam.

SERMONS

PREACHED IN

THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY IN ROXBURY,

BY

GEORGE PUTNAM,

MINISTER OF THE SOCIETY.

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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH the author of these sermons could never be persuaded to make a selection from his manuscripts for the press, and had an entire distrust of their value for any other purpose than his own delivery from the pulpit, yet he did not destroy them nor leave any injunction upon their use after his death. His representatives, therefore, feel neither obliged nor disposed to disappoint the strong desire of many persons to have some permanent, however inadequate, memorial of a preacher who so long exercised such unusual power in the pulpit, and who was so much beloved by so large a circle of personal friends. They accordingly offer this selection.

The sermons are printed in the order of date without any attempt at arrangement. The four dated January, 1860, will, however, be found to constitute a connected series.

As this is intended largely, perhaps mainly, as a memorial volume, it has been thought fitting to add as an Appendix three discourses whose

interest is in a great measure personal. They are the first and the last productions of a ministry of over forty-five years. The two sermons called "Introductory" were preached in July, 1830, on the first Sunday after the preacher's ordination. The address at the ordination of his colleague was delivered in October, 1875, and was the only one he ever wrote for the pulpit after the stroke of paralysis which closed his active career in December, 1872.

CONTENTS.

		PAGE
I.	If Thou hadst been here	1
II.	I have trodden the Wine-Press alone	15
III.	Life a Voyage	26
IV.	Jesus and Solomon	43
V.	Almost and Altogether	58
VI.	Tekel	71
VII.	Christian Manliness — Doing and Standing	84
VIII.	Go Quickly	98
IX.	True Religion	110
X.	Unitarianism	124
XI.	Infidelity	140
XII.	One Faith	159
XIII.	The Windows towards Jerusalem	176
XIV.	Oh, that I knew!	193
XV.	The One Foundation	208
XVI.	The Offense of the Cross	223
XVII.	Science and Theology	234
XVIII.	Hath God said it?	249
XIX.	Righteousness First	262

XX. HINDRANCES 278
XXI. ANTHROPOMORPHISM 293
XXII. THOU SHALT SAY, NO 309
XXIII. THE MIRACLE OF CANA 322

APPENDIX.

INTRODUCTORY I. 337
INTRODUCTORY II. 351
III. ORDAINING ADDRESS 361

I.

IF THOU HADST BEEN HERE.

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. — *John* xi. 21.

LAZARUS of Bethany fell sick. Jesus, the friend of the family, who doubtless had often rested Himself under their kindly roof, and repaid their hospitality by his presence, was absent, tarrying beyond the Jordan. How they missed Him then! At such a time how one craves to have the strongest, wisest, holiest friends by to lean upon. They may be powerless, but there is a feeling of support, security, peace in their mere presence. We can imagine the sisters, Mary and Martha, as they tended their dying brother in those excited solemn hours, when love despairs, and the heart sinks within, and the dreadful hour of parting draws nigh, saying over and over one to the other, "Oh! if He were only here!" And when Lazarus had been buried, and Martha went out to meet Jesus on his approach, her very first words were those of the text, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." How natural to speak just so! Those sisters had indeed peculiar reason to speak so, for they might well expect of Jesus such an interposition

of healing as cannot be looked for ordinarily in the scenes of human anxiety and grief. And yet it is very common, when death has come upon a beloved one, for the afflicted survivor to think and to say, Oh! if this or that thing had been done, or done sooner, if such a person had been consulted, or such a course or act had been avoided, if, and if, and if, this or that thing had been not so but otherwise, the event would have been different, and our lost one would have been with us yet. Not seldom does the bereaved mind find it difficult to divert itself from these vain suppositions, and turn in acquiescence to right views and the true solace.

I do not wish to dwell on this first thought of the text. It opens a wider view. *If* thou hadst been here! *If.* It is often remarked casually in conversation, "How great a word is that very little word *if*,"—and it seems to me there is meaning enough in the remark, and serious and important enough, to fill up and constitute a grave Sabbath day's discourse. *If*—that word expresses the conditionality of all events, all interests, all results. Everything is conditional. There is nothing absolute but God, and those abstract, universal principles which proceed directly from his attributes.

Any event, or any state of things which we contemplate, is as it is because a million preceding events took place as they did, and if any one of those preceding events had not occurred, the event or state of things now before us would

have been different, or would not have been at all.

Not to notice now those circumstances of creation and providence which have determined the order of nature, the position of continents, the configuration of states, the climate, the soil of all lands, a slight change in which circumstances would have changed the whole face of the world, consider, a single moment, how it has been with the great nations and dynasties that have shaped the history of mankind.

Where or what would have been the Hebrew race, where Jerusalem and all its history, and all the influences that have issued thence, had not Joseph been prime minister when his father sent to Egypt for bread? Or had not Pharaoh's daughter strayed down to the river side just at the hour when the infant Moses lay there ready to perish in his rush basket? Or had not David in his shepherd days learned to play on the harp whereby he found favor with Saul? Or had not a thousand other things occurred just as they did and not otherwise.

Roman history was the world's history for a thousand years, and all subsequent history has grown out of it; but where or what would Rome have been if the wolf in the desert had not been kind to the infant Romulus, — if that legend be true?

If the assassin had struck his poniard an inch to the right or left, and Henry IV. had lived to be old, what would French history have been for

the last century? Where Louis XIV. and the Regency, and the Revolution, and Napoleon, and Waterloo, the Europe of this day?

If a messenger from Bristol to York had gone a little round and gone safe, and William the Conqueror had lost one of his battles, where and what would have been the England of the last few centuries — England and all her great men and her institutions and her colonies, these American colonies among the rest? Who can tell what events hung on that *if*?

If the pilot of the Mayflower had not been dishonest or unskillful, where and what would have been this our New England?

All great things depend upon innumerable little things happening just so. A storm at sea, an order misunderstood on a battle-field, the slipping of a foot, the glancing of a sword, an accident to a child, the whisper of a woman, the hissing of a goose, the passing of a cloud over the moon, — these things, and countless things like them, have affected the great events of centuries, the fate of nations, the history of the world. At every point of time's progress, if this or that slightest possible circumstance had been different by a moment of time or a hair's breadth of space, the entire web of human history, into which our individual biographies are all woven, would have been woven all differently, — the whole web and each separate thread, ours, every man's.

Whenever we try to run out this infinite chain of contingencies, and see how the whole depends

upon each link, and to speculate as to what would have been if any single link had been wanting or differently placed, we are lost in an endless maze of possibilities. It becomes idle reverie to pursue it. Only the Omniscient One can look it through. And surely He can. His providence is over the world. He has not left his works to the caprice of chance. He has presided over the course of events. He is not disappointed. He is not taken by surprise at human history as it evolves itself link by link in the everlasting passage from cause to effect. He has known the bearing of every circumstance, the least as well as the greatest, from the death of a Cæsar to the fall of a sparrow, from the inundation of a continent to the rounding of a dew-drop. This infinite web of affairs passes on through the loom of time beneath his all-seeing eye. He foresees the end. He has a purpose. We grow dizzy in the attempt to follow a single thread even a little way. We can but adore and trust God. Happy if we can do that.

Standing on the giddy heights of contemplation, and sending our glance out over the unfathomable ocean of contingencies, the past, the present, the future, we feel as atoms floating in immensity; the brain reels; we are weak, we are ignorant, we are little children of yesterday, our boasted faculties falter at the very threshold of knowledge; yet as all the rest give way and leave us humble and helpless, one faculty remains, the highest and dearest of all, that whereby we can

fall back into the bosom of infinite intelligence and love, and feel the everlasting arm that encircles all things embracing us also, and can repose there and look up and adore with a worship that alone makes us great, and pray and trust with a faith that alone makes us strong.

In a narrower field, that of our own personal fortunes and character, we are more prone to contemplate the tissue of contingencies on which our condition has depended and does depend. Within this little field there is much which it is practicable and legitimate for us to contemplate and study out, — not all indeed, only the slightest fraction of the whole, yet something.

Let us point out now some of the directions which our thoughts are apt to take in the region of contingencies, and see how far and to what ends it is well to indulge such thoughts. That region covers the *Past* and the *Future*.

I. As to the *Past*. But I must subdivide this general head.

First, then, from amid misfortunes and sorrows and sufferings, from scenes of trial when these befall us, from an unhappy position, we look back to see the causes, to see how it has come to pass so with us, and how it might have been different with us, if we had had more foresight or sagacity, or other persons had dealt differently by us, or Providence had let some event occur otherwise. It is natural to indulge such thoughts, and so far as we may gather wisdom from the study of such past contingencies to guide us in those which

shall occur hereafter, it is well to indulge them, but not often. Do not do it often. Such thoughts soon become morbid, a sickly, fruitless brooding. They breed discontent and gloom. They will make you murmur at Providence, and make you sour or resentful towards your fellow-men, or will turn the sense of your imperfection of judgment and forecast into useless vexation with yourself, or perhaps into haunting accusation of conscience concerning things with which the conscience had nothing to do. Accustom yourself to such a reverie of *ifs*, go on to open all those contingencies which time has closed, and there is no end to the extravagances which you may muster whereby to accuse God and man and your own shortsightedness. You may in imagination restore the fortune that has been missed of or lost. You may mount up to the desired social position which you aspired to, but failed to achieve. You may start up whole from the bed of sickness or the chair of infirmity and pain. You may bring back your dead, your child, your parent, your friend, and make complete again the dear circle of love and happiness. You may roll back the dark cloud of adversity, disappointment, and grief that a chastening God has drawn over you. You may go on thus till you have subverted the whole order of Providence and nature. But what avails it but to make the reality more dark and severe, to deepen sorrow into despair and turn patience into repining. Those are the *ifs* that beget skepticism

and distrust; harbor them not. The unhappy issues which God and time have closed, let them remain closed. Find in them the good that is meant in them, instead of that which you vainly desired. Sorrow must look forward, not backward, for light and solace.

Secondly. From amid happy circumstances and a prosperous lot we look back upon the contingencies that issued favorably; and this is a better and healthier thing to do than the other. It is good to note the things in which Providence has been kind to us, for that will awaken religious gratitude. And it is not amiss to ask ourselves sometimes, What if this or that good event had been otherwise? If you have attained to happiness, a satisfying success, think, — there is no harm in that reverie, — think what a narrow path you have traveled over, and a precipice on either side; think, if that good mother had not by those gentle influences bent my wild dispositions aright, or if a wise father had not held me back from folly by that hand of authority; if those faithful friends had not interposed here and there by the way, by word or act, to guide and help me; if this or that misstep, that might have borne me down, had not been overruled by a happy circumstance; if a very blessing from heaven had not crowned and overcrowned my poor and half blind endeavors; *if, if,* ten thousand *ifs* come up. No man can number his own, much less another's. I see not how the healthy, the prosperous, the happy, — how any such man

or woman can look back upon those numberless *ifs* that have turned favorably, and were just as likely, so far as they can see, to have turned otherwise, and any one of which, turning wrong, might have been fatal, — how he can call to mind the way in which the good hand of God has led him on, how he can think, look upon his blessings and think, look back and think, without turning all his happiness into one fervent outflow of thanksgiving to God, and all his memories into one collective offering of the heart's praise unto the Father of all mercies.

Thirdly. From amid the sufferings, losses, and sharp regrets brought on by sin, the memory will sometimes look back through the eye of conscience, and finds enough to ponder. The man who has blasted his reputation and lost the confidence of men by base and fraudulent deeds, and walks abroad, cowering or brazen, beneath the looks of distrust or contempt that are turned to him, degraded and virtually proscribed, — he looks back to the time when his good name was in his own power, and it lay with him to do right or wrong, and he would have been among the honored and the trusted — *if*. What a painful *if* is that! The wretched inebriate, the blasted debauchee, in a sober hour of reflection looks back, from out his pit of degradation, looks back to those moments when his fate was balanced on an *if*, — if he had prevailed over that first temptation, if he had shunned this bad companion, and joined himself to that good and true friend. He

thinks what he is, and thinks what he might have been, *if* — that *if* — once it was poised like a delicate balance, and he could have turned it the other way with a breath; now the beam has gone down and no human power can lift it again.

The convict, in his cell awaiting his just doom. Fiercely do his thoughts fly back. He loses himself in visions of the past as in a dream. He recalls the turning points in his life's career, — *if* he had listened to that good angel in his breast who whispered of better things. If he had withheld that first misstep as he might so easily have done; if he had retraced it while yet there was time; if he had curbed that first outbreak of passion or that first wandering of lawless desire; if he had listened to that word of loving and wise counsel which he listened to and balanced and let go; if he had embraced that opportunity, offered him far back, to enter upon an honest and virtuous course — *if*, *if*, a hundred *ifs* — and as he wakes to the reality of his condition, how full of agony they are, those dreadful *ifs*, they mock him like tormenting devils; once they were like yielding air, and he might do as he would with them; now they stand there like barriers of adamant, inexorable as fate and firm as his dungeon walls.

We all have enough of those moral *ifs* to look at. We think of our misdeeds, our shortcomings, our neglects, our imperfections, our manifold sins, and every one of them hung once

upon an *if*, every one of them was once a contingency, any one of them would have turned otherwise *if* — those humbling, remorseful *ifs*. They are too painful, too harrowing to think of habitually, but it is profitable to give them some earnest thoughts, — enough to provoke a godly sorrow, and an effectual repentance, and a firmer, wiser will in the coming contingencies.

II. Our *second* head was to relate to the future. Of this we must make two.

First. Consider the uncertainty of all our plans and hopes. God has made us to look forward and take thought for the time to come, and we do it. Schemes, prospects, hopes, how ingeniously we fashion and adorn them, and set them forward before us, arranged in bright tableaux on the curtain of the future! Well, we must do it, and it is right. But consider sometimes on what numberless conditions they all depend. Will they be realized? Yes, *if* and *if*, again these thousand *ifs* in the path, any one of which may be a gulf that we cannot pass. It may come out as we hope, but there is an *if* at every step we take, in every wind that blows, in every fibre of our bodies, in every breath we inhale. The life of every one we love passes every moment over an if that trembles as a fine balance. Our property, our dwelling, our employment, our health, our life, — they will remain till to-morrow *if*—. We lie down upon our pillows and commit ourselves unreservedly to sleep and darkness, and shall rise to-morrow if — Oh!

think! The strong man goes forth to welcome his friends to his hospitality, to make merry and be glad with him. An unseen hand arrests him by the way, and he shall see a friend no more with the eye of flesh. The sprightly woman returns in health and cheerfulness from errands of friendship, with quick steps to the duties of home; an invisible power stops her at the threshold of her dwelling, and she may never pass it alive again. Five men in the prime of life and vigor sit down around the table to take counsel together in midsummer; before the leaf falls four of them are laid in their graves. Behold everywhere the tokens of instability and change; see how the flower of the morning withers before night-fall; see how precarious are all the counsels of man. And look forward. Look at the fairest bud of promise and rejoice in it, but perhaps a worm lies coiled within it. The sun that rises so bright to-day may go down in storms. To-day we are strong in prosperity, to-morrow may find any man amongst us a beggar. To-day we sit rejoicing in the warm circles of love and friendship, to-morrow we may be robed for the lone and narrow grave. Plan and hope for the future, it is God's will, but think *if* and *if*, the ever recurring and ever dubious contingencies; think of them, too, and be humble, be self-distrustful. Put not your trust in riches; count not on lengthened days; promise yourself no exemption from pain and grief. Trust God and nothing else. God and not events. God and not

your own wisdom or strength. Give heed to those good, plain words of the Apostle: "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even as a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

Secondly and finally. It is best of all to meditate upon those contingencies of the future whose issues depend upon our own will. There are some such, many such, and they are the greatest. There are moral decisions to be made at every step before us. The mighty balance of moral contingency swings poised at every bend in our path, and as we turn it, it is turned unalterable forever, for good or for evil immeasurable.

Behold the child or youth; what great and beautiful possibilities, and what frightful risks and perils lie covered up and hidden within that young breast. If he shall heed the good voice, follow the good impulse, plant himself on the true rock, if he will take heed in time, if he will choose the right and adhere to it, if he will begin now and persevere as duty dictates and love pleads, Oh! happy, happy, blessed forever! or if not, if not, let him look around and see what, if not; let him inquire of his own soul in all its coming regret and shame, what if not. Let him ask of God's word, what if not. Many things in our future depend not on ourselves. God will order them as it pleaseth Him, and it shall be

well. But these moral *ifs*, they are the real hinges of our destiny, and our own hands shall bend them as we will for our joy or our doom. And so long as they are ours to determine, let us meditate, let us pray, let us strive, let us resolve in the strength of God's grace to bend them aright.

1847.

II.

I HAVE TRODDEN THE WINE-PRESS ALONE.

I have trodden the wine-press alone. — *Isaiah* lxiii. 3.

I SHALL take only the sentiment of this text. It teaches no doctrine. It declares no great principle. It only suggests a thought, and awakens a feeling. I need not, therefore, study out the connections of the passage, or show what it strictly means as it stands related to the sublime imagery that precedes and follows it in that old book of the prophet. The tone of it is my text. I will attempt nothing but to echo and prolong a little the sound of it, striking so fitly as it does upon the ear that is attuned to Sabbath meditations.

"I have trodden the wine-press alone." The sound of the words is solemn and pensive and almost mournful. It lingers on the ear like the sigh of a lonely spirit. It comes as a strain from the heart's desert places, a voice from the deep solitudes of life, where the help and sympathy of man cannot reach. It seems to speak of those burdens which the human soul must bear alone, the dangers it must struggle with alone, and of those great crises of existence in which the arm

of friendship and the heart of love are withdrawn or are unavailing. This is the tone of our text; and there is something in every breast that vibrates to it, as to a truth that every one finds, or will find, in some hours, in some experiences, in some epochs of life, to be a truth to him.

We are made for society, and we are also made for solitude. We are made for the free and confiding converse of our fellow-men, and we are made for lonely thoughts and emotions in which none living may take part. We are made for those ties of life which bind united hearts together in mutual helpfulness and make them one to do and to bear through love and brotherly kindness. And we are made, too, to undergo the dissolution of those ties, and for emergencies in which the soul can have no earthly partner. There are times in which to feel that we are everything to one another, and can double our blessings by sharing them, and halve our woes by breathing and bearing them together, and times in which to find that nothing can be done for us, and that there are wants of the soul that transcend the power of man to supply. There are a thousand ways in which God would have us feel that we are one for mutual aid, and He has ways also to teach us that we are so many separate beings and pass before Him one by one, and can lean only upon Him, and have no other stay.

There are two kinds of loneliness appointed for man. The one is a privilege offered, the other is a trial imposed. The one is assigned

for the rest and refreshment of the spirit; the other for its chastening, to test its faith in God and its reliance on things stronger and more enduring than an equal's love and care. The first is that which Jesus sought on those several occasions, on which, as we are told, He went apart into the mountain, into the desert, into the garden, apart by Himself, to meditate and to pray, to converse with Himself and with the Father, in a higher communion than that of earthly kindred and friends. We cannot penetrate the privacy of that exalted spirit. But we know the necessities of our own souls. Every soul of man, if it has awakened to a consciousness of itself, if it has risen out of the earthiness of its condition here, needs its solitary hours. The best thoughts that we gain from the speech of men are matured, made our own, only by private meditation. The highest joys which visit us from God or man, though they are given to be shared with others, are not felt with a full appreciation, unless the heart has had opportunity to ponder them in the stillness of its privacy. The best purposes, though, it may be, first conceived amid a crowd, and to be carried out among men again, want maturing and building up in the solitary place of contemplation when the mind may clear up its moral vision and muster the energies of will by itself. There is a good work of self-examination that is not assisted but disturbed by any human testimony or adjudication. The very affections that bind us closest to those we love

are strengthened and purified by those separate hours wherein the heart cherishes only the image that is lodged within itself and spreads out its treasures only to its own eye and God's. Both wisdom and virtue and the good affections, whose sphere of exercise and beneficence is the thick-peopled world, must derive much of their nourishment and strength in those silent scenes and from amid those secret thoughts with which no man intermeddleth. And for those deeper experiments, and those higher aspirings of the soul, for the faith that reaches beyond the dome of the material universe to the heaven of heavens and the spirit's home; for the piety that melts in repentance and rejoices in hope and trusts in God, for these the secret place of devotion and meditation is the nursery that no soul of man can outgrow or spare while tabernacled in the flesh. The thronged temple of worship and instruction has its sacred uses and fitness and its dear sanctities, and the intercourse of kindred spirits traveling one way, and seeking the same end, has its edifying power; but the place preëminently hallowed by Christ's words and his disciples' experience in every age is the closet, the solitary place where the soul takes account with itself and renews its vows, and devotion revives its flame, and faith and hope plume anew their ever-fainting wings. Personal religion cannot dispense with its privilege of voluntary loneliness. It cannot live by the breath of others alone. Sympathy is its mighty helper, but solitude is neces-

sary to its being. No closet, no Christianity. So teaches our Lord, and so teaches all the experience of his followers.

But all this is the chosen, the refreshing loneliness, that is not imposed, but sought by every believing and thoughtful mind and feeling heart. Our text is pitched to a more sad and serious note. It should turn our thoughts to that other loneliness that seems more desolate, that in which we cannot have companions. "I have trodden the wine-press alone." There is many a dread and solemn way in which man must walk alone, apart from every fellow-creature. Where we seem most to need companionship and sympathy, often we cannot have it. In the exigencies in which affection would wish to do most for us, it cannot stretch forth its helping hand, cannot do anything. In the severest perils there is no loving care of a fellow-creature to deliver us. We must meet temptation alone, and affliction often alone, and death alone, and the judgment alone. Give a few moment's thought to each of them.

Temptation, we must meet, each one, alone. Parents have instructed, friends have warned us. Many of the wise and kind would guide us, and the words and looks and hearts of the loving have pleaded with us, that we keep the paths of innocence and virtue, rectitude and purity. But sin takes us by ourselves and makes its offers to us one by one. Every soul must meet the tempter face to face, like Jesus in the wilderness, alone. No guardian hand can bar out his enchantments,

no voice can say for us, Get thee hence. That contest must be waged in the secret breast, where no allies can interpose to turn away the tide of battle. The strength of principle and of will that resides in every mind must undergo the fearful test of its sufficiency alone. There is no proxy admitted in that war. They who, through love, would die for us, if they might, cannot save us from falling there, though the fall were worse than death. We must stand alone behind the ramparts of individual conscience. We must take the sword of the spirit in our own hand, and go forth to that dread encounter alone. Every child of man must leave his friends behind while he grapples single-handed with his moral adversary, to stand or fall by the force that is in him. Friends may counsel, watch, and pray. But they must stand aloof, though we perish. We must tread that wine-press alone.

In affliction we are sometimes alone. There are sorrows which no sympathy can avail to assuage. There are some bereavements that seem to make the earth a desert. When the nearest and best beloved die, all other voices but remind us that the voice we desire most is silenced, and all other companionship seems null and vain. The more our friends gather round us in their kindness, the more we feel the inadequacy of all remaining things to fill the void, and there is a more utter loneliness in society than in solitude. And the sight of the eyes is more unsubstantial to the heart than the images of memory. He

who amid the vicissitudes of human relations does not sometimes feel a loneliness that all the world cannot people, has been always alone, and has never known the society of the heart.

In death we are alone. That is a narrow path where no two may walk abreast. Though a thousand should breathe their last breath together, there is no fellowship. When that hour comes to us, the beloved cannot detain us nor go with us. They cannot ward off the stroke nor share it. Science and skill may interpose their delays and offer their alleviations. Affection will smooth the pillow and soothe with new devotion the last hours of life ; but when the hour comes, all must stand back, and look on in impotence and see us launch alone upon the unexplored sea of eternity. The little child that had never strayed for an hour from the cherishing shelter of the parental bosom, must go forth to that untried bourne alone. The aged one, that has leaned upon devoted children through every step of the decline, must at last drop every staff and pass into the shadow of that valley alone. Those who have been one by most sacred ties and affections, and have stood side by side in every strait and peril of the earthly walk, are parted at that brink, nor can any more stretch out a hand to one another, nor speak a word to guide or cheer, nor so much as exchange signals of recognition and remembrance. Shrouded and coffined, alone, the body goes to the place of graves, followed yet alone, and takes its place in the tomb alone. Reverent

and gentle hands may lay us down to rest, but they return to the scenes of life and leave us there alone. And though we be laid beside the dust of kindred, with those we have loved the best, there is no communion. "Stay by me," said a dying parent to her only child watching by her weary bed; "stay by me, will you not, to the last?" And he stayed, but soon the closing eye knew not his features, and the ear knew not the voice that had been the music of its life, and the nerveless hand returned not, nor distinguished the pressure of his hand. He was no better than a hireling. Not even filial love could add one throb to the beating pulse or prolong one moment the fleeting breath; and when the last came, though she was his mother and had done so much for him, he could do nothing for her but give up her dust to the ground alone, and commend the spirit to its God alone.

We must appear before God alone — alone in judgment; human love may not interpose there to cloak our sins with charity, or take the blame of them upon itself, or claim to share the condemnation that may await them. In the great concerns of the conscience there can be no partnership here or hereafter. For that harvest every man has his own field to sow, fenced off from every other; and what he soweth, that also must he reap, — he himself alone. They who have watched over us most carefully that the winds might not blow on us too rudely, and have labored for us that we might not labor, and suf-

fered for us that we might not suffer, and made it the study of their life to remove or lighten every burden that would oppress us, — they, the nearest and most devoted, — it is not they, not *their* love and mercy, not their intercession that can remove one feather from the weight of sin and guiltiness, or abate one jot of the righteous retributions we have incurred. The most friendless, and the best befriended, stand equal and alone alike at that bar, — alone with God.

Such are some of the modes of that loneliness which is assigned to every mortal to bear and to feel. These are a few hints of the universal experience. It must some time be yours, and mine, and every man's. We must tread the wine-press alone.

And God is wise in this solemn and sad appointment. He would teach us to find Him, to commune with Him, in that solitariness which none other may enter. No number and no devotedness of earthly friends can be always sufficient for the soul. The times must come when they are powerless and must withdraw. It will be felt then, and it should be felt before, that the Almighty and unfailing friend should not be left out of our regards, unknown and unheeded. Human love cannot always stand us instead. The hour cometh when God, our Father, must be all to us, or we have nothing. When we must discern his presence and his love, or find desolation indeed ; when we must have trust in his mercy, for all other trust fails ; when we must

take his outstretched hand or sink, helpless and utterly forsaken, and every spark of hope be quenched. Acquaint now thyself with God, and seek Him while He may be found, for the days draw nigh when thou canst have no other. Make thy peace with Him now by penitence and obedience. Make thyself near to Him in confidence and prayer.

Our religion inspires the hope that when all the waste places of earth and time and death shall have been passed, and they who have pleased God shall be welcomed to his many mansions, the society of earth shall be more than renewed by a spiritual and enduring companionship with the blest, in unchanging love and holiness. But we cannot reach that abode till we have trodden the wine-press alone; till we have learned, in solemn experience, that every friend faileth us in our need, and that God must be all in all. We must pass alone through the great issues of existence, lose the pressure of every hand, the light of every eye, the cheer of every voice. Let us see to it that we carry into those dread passages of our being the things that may sustain us in that trial of loneliness; the good affections that live on though their objects disappear; the hallowed memories that survive the social scenes in which they had their birth; the strength of soul that the good and loving may have imparted, and that may remain in us though they are not by to exert it; the satisfactions that may continue, though the sphere of duty where

we won them has faded away; the hopes that will still yield their cheering flame when there is no other light, and that faith of a pious heart that all the waters of death cannot quench. We should make these our own, and secure them early and surely. We must not live on without them. Amid the multitudes of friends, amid all strong sympathies and fond affections, the smiles of fortune and of love, remember the sure coming times of loneliness, and make close and strong the tie that joins thee to thy God. And when the struggle comes in which none can help, the sorrow which none can console, and the pains that none can alleviate, and the grave opens for thy coming, and the bar of righteous judgment appears for thy hearing, — in all that loneliness make it now the heart's familiar speech, — I am not alone, nevertheless; I am not alone, for the Father, his hand shall lead me and his right hand uphold me; his countenance is my light, and his mercy is my refuge and my trust.

1847.

III.

LIFE A VOYAGE.

Behold also the ships. — *James* iii. 4.

THE Apostle makes this maritime allusion to illustrate a single point of morality, and we may properly take it up in reference to the whole moral condition of life. The sacred writers, and indeed all moralists, have been fond of such analogies. The poetry of all ages, in its more serious strains, is filled with the similitudes of life, finding emblems of man's profoundest spiritual experiences in the things and events of God's outward creation and providence.

And the human mind generally has been disposed to take up and repeat those likenings, for instruction and impression, and for the expression of its own more serious reflections. Accordingly they have found a place in the familiar proverbs of all races. Human life is so vast, so mysterious a theme, contains so many problems that are inexplicable from their grandeur and complexity, and involves so many interests that press home upon every man's heart and consciousness, that it will make itself a subject of frequent contemplation, in some of its larger

or smaller departments and aspects. And we always feel as if we had obtained some little illumination of the theme, or had thrown some faint ray of wisdom upon it, whenever we find or utter any one of those similitudes which illustrate what we cannot describe, and reveal by symbolic suggestions what we cannot comprehend in propositions.

We hardly need go beyond the Bible to obtain a complete series of those analogies to which I have referred, and which find a place in all literature, and occasional recognition in the daily speech and sober meditations of men. We find in the Bible no elaborate, exhaustive description of human life, for that could not be contained in human language; but we find numerous similitudes. Life is a battle, or a campaign. It is a race, a pilgrimage, or a journey. It is a dream, a vapor, or a tale that is told. It is a vineyard, a field to labor in. It is a stewardship, or money in trust. It is a school, a temporary tent, a forecourt or porch to a temple eternal in the heavens, and many things of this kind, which the moralist loves to seize upon, to give point to the trite precepts of Christian virtue; which the poet loves to expand, to give beauty to moral wisdom, and the popular heart cherishes as giving a body to its vague impressions of high and solemn truth.

Our text suggests one of these analogies, — and one of the most impressive and fertile of them. "Behold also the ships." Life is a voyage. The

sea and men's dealings with it have always supplied many symbols to body forth men's earnest thoughts on the career, the fortunes, the experiences, the dangers, and the hopes of the human being, as he passes over the narrow straits of time into the ocean of eternity. To one familiar with the aspects of the sea, and yet not so familiar with them as to make them commonplace, and limited to the mere associations of business, — to such an one the sea is perhaps the most impressive part of the creation, and is fraught with moral suggestions of the most striking and elevated character. There is nothing in nature, except perhaps the evening sky, — which is almost too familiar a spectacle to preserve its lessons fresh, — there is nothing else that gives such an impression of *infinity* as the ocean. To the eye, and almost to the imagination, it is boundless. To the plummet, it is unfathomable. Its depths are secret and mysterious. Abroad on its open expanse no objects intervene to help us to compass its vastness, or to weaken our sense of its grandeur. And the power which the sea exhibits deepens this feeling of infinity. The sea, ever moving, never resting, heaving every moment from its foundations, and sending its huge tidal waves as by one act, and in one unbroken series, around the globe, — one hour so tranquil and beneficent, and the next a devouring monster, — to-day bearing the navies of the earth gently upon its friendly bosom, and to-morrow, it may be, ready to wrench them to pieces by its vio-

lence, and to engulf them in its opening depths, — it is as it were a living omnipotence — omnipotence in action, — the visible type of Almighty power, put forth in sensible reality. In other departments of nature the omnipotence of God is rather an inference of the understanding, — something that was displayed at some remote and uncertain period of creation. The sea is a present image and expression of it. And then the sea is so unchanging. The land is always varying its aspect. The seasons diversify it constantly. The face of it is altered by the works of man, from generation to generation, and from year to year. The very heavens are changed, as to the place and arrangement of the stars, every night and every hour. But the sea changes not. The first families of men saw it as we see it. Age after age, men have looked forth and ventured upon it, and through all time it has been to them what it is to us, — presenting to the eye and to the ear and to the feeling the same boundless expanse, the same mounting and breaking of its waves, the same solemn moan and roar, the same unwearied flowing and ebbing of its tides. When we look upon Niagara, who is not constrained, among the multitude of thoughts which crowd upon one in that stupendous scene, to ask himself: Is it possible that it has been rolling over thus; flowing on and sounding on, so vast and so majestic, through the long ages? And when we have come home, does not the question arise: Can it be that

it still keeps on, just the same, day and night, summer and winter, and is to keep on so forever? The same questionings are natural to one who muses by the sea-shore. There it is, the mighty deep, rolling on the same forever. The waves advancing, breaking, and retreating to-day, just as they did unknown ages ago, and will keep on doing without rest or interruption, for unknown ages to come. I do not know anything in the other aspects of nature, — certainly not in any numerical calculations, — or any efforts of abstract thought, that give so vivid and solemn an impression of the vast stretch of time, of the unbounded continuity of existence, so near an approximation to a sense and an appreciation of eternity.

Such are the elements of the feeling of infinity connected with the sea. And that is the bond of sympathy between it and the soul. Any impression of the infinite which we ever obtain awakens a sense of something that corresponds to it in our own nature and being. There is something infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible in our own souls. The sea is almost brother to the human spirit, — the type, the mirror of some of the same great attributes imaged forth within us. Here within us are desires, restless and insatiable; affections that never find objects adequate to fill and exhaust them; thoughts that pass beyond all bounds of material things; faculties that have never found their limit; susceptibilities of enjoyment and of suffering which it is

almost appalling to think of; fears which the image of unutterable hells has not been able to outrun, and hopes which this world can do little more than provoke, and a thousand worlds, such as we are yet able to conceive of, could not satisfy or outstrip. And then that ever-haunting sense of a something within that shall not die, — the overshadowing consciousness of an immortal nature and an endless career, — a feeling which may be shaped into a fixed and definite faith, or may be a dreamy speculation, or even but a half conscious anticipation, yet which can never be divorced from the living soul, can never die out of it wholly, can never be reasoned out of it, nor denied nor scoffed out of it, but must mix itself, consciously or unconsciously, with the deep fountains of the heart's emotions, and move and act among the very roots of our being.

Yes, there is an infinity investing and permeating our mental life. Every man feels it sometimes, though he use not the name, or know not what it means. There is a sense of it that accompanies all great thought, all profound feeling, all living and elevated moods of mind, and helps to raise and magnify them. Whatever in the outward universe helps that feeling, and becomes its type, its memorial, and its guide, is as improving, as uplifting to the soul, as it is beautiful to the imagination and dear and welcome to the heart. And it is because the great ocean has this likeness to spiritual reality, this sympathy and kinship with the human spirit,

that it has been so rich in its moral suggestions to the meditative mind, and has supplied so many emblems of human life in the common thought and speech of men.

But the metaphors that abound in all human languages derive their chief force from more specific similitudes. A fine ship going out of her port is more like a thing of life than any other object in the inanimate creation, — so graceful, majestic, and buoyant. She is always spoken of as a person, never referred to in the neuter gender. The sailor's language of pride, of confidence, respecting his good ship, is the language of personification, regards her as alive, performing well of her own good will, responsible for her faults, and entitled to the praise of all her successes. Almost a human interest attaches to her as she starts for her destination. The merchant's hopes go with her; she may make, or she may mar, his fortunes, as she behaves, or as Providence favors her. The affections and the prayers of many hearts on shore — of wife and mother and children — hover over her as she parts from her moorings, and follow her on her pathless course. Tender hopes and anxious fears, and long lingering uncertainty, await the issue of her adventure. And the ship herself looks — or such is the power of association that she *seems* to look and to move — in sympathy with these human feelings. She seems instinct with proud confidence, as she bounds forth upon the bosom of the sea, and with her head directed

to her distant port breasts the tide and parts the wave, and spreads her sails trustfully to the winds as if she were stronger than all the elements, and could compel them to serve her. And then, again, as she prudently takes her pilot, and seems to feel after the safe channel, and watches the lights and the buoys, and shuns the hidden rocks, and measures her distance from the visible headlands, she seems as if she were conscious of her frailty and aware of the perils that beset her, and felt the need of constant vigilance and precaution, as if she feared as well as hoped. Through the eye of her master, who is rather her servant, she wakes night and day, and watches the clouds and the winds, and every sign of hidden shoals and of land ahead, and in the dark puts a light aloft to warn her sisters of the deep against the fatal collision.

Yes, this is an image of human life in some of its aspects. No wonder that seamen apply personal epithets and ascribe personal qualities to their ships, and that the eyes and hearts of men follow her, as she moves from her port, with a human interest and sympathy.

It is with a like feeling that the eye of love and sympathy watches and follows man, as he goes forth from the haven of his youthful home and domestic security upon the voyage of life, upon the broad sea of business and adventure, with everything to hope for, and yet with everything at stake.

What an era, what a crisis it is to the youth

himself, and to those few whose hearts are bound up in him, when he sets out upon his own, his independent life, to shape his own destiny, to stand by his own strength, or to fall by his own weakness. How he shall fare, how he shall conduct himself, on his voyage, and how complete it, is a question of more profound and thrilling moment to him, and to those with whose hopes and fears and affections his life is freighted, than the fate of empires and the destinies of half the world beside. Happy if we could always see him with the signs of the same wisdom that mark the movements of his inanimate type, the good ship starting on her voyage. We like to discern in him the same energetic qualities, the same buoyant and hopeful spirit, the same brave front and gallant step, as if to tread the waves of fortune triumphantly under his feet, and leave them to gather up and smooth themselves at their leisure in his wake, while he moves on unimpeded and rejoicing. We love to see in him the same stout courage and good cheer, as he spreads his canvas confidently to the winds of heaven. We do not want to see him keeping aloof from the great sea of stirring life, like a ship rotting at the wharf, or creeping timidly along the familiar shore. Let him launch forth boldly. Let him venture upon the deep sea of life if he feels that he is built and furnished for it. Let him try his own powers. Let him enter upon the sphere where only a guarding Providence and his own true heart can help him and keep him. The

manly voyage of life must, like all other voyages, be carried out in some sense alone. And so be it. Let us have confidence in youth, and let it have confidence in itself, — confidence and hope, courage and energy.

But those other qualities of the good ship, the prudence, the vigilance, the sense of frailty and of peril, let the young man have these also. There are rocks of temptation in the sea of life that will dash him to pieces if he recklessly run upon them. There are sudden gusts, and long-blowing gales of passion which, if he let them strike him unprepared, will sink him in the deeps of sin and ruin. There are false lights to lure him to a fatal shore. There are a thousand dangers that may wreck him, even as the goodliest ship, and the proudest that was ever built of heart of oak, may founder like a log in the mid-ocean, or be cast up, a shattered hulk, on the beach. Let him know his dangers. Let him know that he is frail. Let him know that he is but a cockle-shell on the crests of the sea, unless he be prepared and braced at all points. The mighty elements of the moral world will toss and rend him as lightly as a child's paper boat, if he commit himself, weak and careless, to their power. Let him watch and strive. The strongest ship will not live a day at sea with her sails set and all hands asleep. A wakeful energy exercised without an hour's intermission, is the only means of her safety and good success. And human well-being, depend upon it, is not secured more easily or with less constancy of care and exertion.

Go forth bravely, in the confidence of your young, exuberant spirits, upon the voyage of life, bravely and hopefully, but seriously, humbly, cautiously. It is a dread voyage upon a deep, deep sea, amid howling winds, and dark nights, and treacherous currents, and angry waves. And your bark is frail at the best. Be not over-confident. Be not rash. Trifle not with any danger. Brave not with a fool-hardy courage the mighty elements that assail you. Watch day and night, with a strong will and a quick conscience and a prayerful heart. Your all is at stake. There is but one voyage of life; there is no second trial. If you are wrecked, there is the end for you, — ruin to yourself, and wretchedness for many hearts that beat for you. If you prosper, the soul's fortune is won, — a precious freight, treasure to be laid up in heaven, and made sure and safe forever.

So far we have noticed the ship particularly as she goes out of port and starts upon her voyage; but way out upon the shoreless sea she still furnishes her moral similitudes. She has her destination. She never drifts at random. Her course is not left to accident to determine. She knows the point she would reach, and never forgets it. She has a magnetic needle for her guide. Through her helmsman's eye she notices how it points almost every moment, and never slights its silent intimations, nor disobeys its infallible directions. It is a little, unobtrusive thing, shut up speechless in its box; but the ship's whole huge,

proud bulk obeys it, and imagines no other way of safety for itself.

And the chart is constantly spread out to give warning of every secret peril, and the distance and conformation of every known coast. And the lead is thrown, to get warning of danger in season, and the quadrant is in hand to bring wisdom from the heavens for her guidance.

How like human life it is! Verily, life is a voyage. It has no other image so striking and complete. The ship and the man are constituted alike. Man, too, has his appointed destination. There is something which all these faculties are appointed to accomplish. There is a goal in the horizon which they are destined to reach. There is a definite work for them to do, a fit character and state of being for them to achieve. These vast powers and susceptibilities with which the soul is endowed we know are not designed to play idly upon the waves of time, or be floated hither and thither by every chance breeze of influence or caprice. There is a port, an aim, towards which it is for man to set his face steadily, and bend his energies firmly, and ply the wheel with vigilant and unyielding resolution. To form and finish forth a whole-souled man, complete in virtue, freighted with moral riches, and prosperous in good deeds, — to round out a well-spent life and make it a good voyage, — this is the object, never to be lost sight of, never to veer from, nor slackly strive for, let the winds of fortune blow as high and as adversely

as they may, or whatever perils and labors may rise up and threaten or obstruct.

And there is in man the same apparatus to assist and guide him in his course and to his goal as in a ship. There is the needle magnet of his conscience by which to steer. A mysterious divine influence has touched its point, so that by an attraction and a power which we cannot comprehend it turns and bends, tremblingly, yet straight and steadily, to God and duty and the right, — the fixed, eternal pole of virtue. It is small, it is silent, it may be easily put aside and out of sight and disregarded. But ask the mariner if that will do. Ask him if the proudest ship can dispense with that mysterious thread of steel. No, not in the ship, nor in the human heart any more. It must be kept in its protected place, sacred from all interference. It must be allowed to play freely on its pivot; no disturbing influences must be suffered to come near it. It must be placed close by the rudder of the will, right under the helmsman's eye. He must watch it ever with reverent solicitude. The rust of neglect must not gather upon it; the salt spray of corroding passion must not have access to it. And it must be touched anew in the ship sometimes with a magnet more powerful than itself; and in the soul it must be touched often, habitually, and replenished with the divine spirit, and renewed with that spiritual magnetism which comes through God's word and good examples, and meditative truth and the prayer of faith.

My friends, lose not the fact in the figure. Follow the conscience, watch it, — be it ever kept in sight, close by the will, kept free and unencumbered. Be it enlightened from above and kept true to its pole by the ever incoming Spirit. Peril and loss and moral wreck attend the neglect of it. Let it rule, though so small and tremulous; let it rule the whole great fabric of your being and direct you in all your aims, and go with you, the supreme, unquestioned guide, amid all desires, all ambitions, all dangers, and all successes, in the fair sunshine and in the stormy night of life, even unto the end. So only shall you come nobly into port, and not wander from your course, nor founder by the way.

And the chart, — that, too, is furnished, and must be used for the voyage of life. It is for man, as for the ship, the result and sum total of other men's experience. In the voyage of life we must give heed to the collective wisdom of mankind. Some portion of it is spread before each one of us for our guidance. It is the chart of experience. Other men, the multitude, have made the same voyage, and sailed for the same port. Some have been wrecked, some damaged and disabled, and some have come in triumphantly, and all of them instruct us by their experience. They have jotted down the treacherous reef, the fatal whirlpool, the intercepting bar, and also the safe roadstead, the good anchorage, and how and where to find the friendly current and the favoring wind. Study other men's moral

experience. See how it was that the fallen fell, and how the crippled were hurt; and how it was that the strong stood their ground, and how the saved escaped their dangers. Let the wise tell us how they found and kept the ways of wisdom. Let the foolish tell us how they came to disregard their compass, or sleep upon their watch, or let the gale of passion find them unprepared. Let the lost show us the rock on which they split. Take warning and take counsel. Let the by-gone generations instruct us. As it has been with others so it will be with us, for good or for evil, if we do likewise.

And then that instrument which the mariner lifts every day to the heavens. Even terrestrial navigation must seek help from above. The material globe cannot be traversed in safety but by daily reference to a celestial luminary. Much less can the voyage of life prosper without it. This life must have light and direction from on high. There must man look for light and direction; the spiritual quadrant must not be laid aside nor left at home. We must take it with us wherever we go, into the thick of business, into the whirl of pleasure, into the night of storms, and raise it daily to God in devout and earnest thought, to measure our progress, to know our losses and our wanderings, to ascertain our position and what is before us. The life on earth will not go on safely and well but with constant reference to the light of heaven and the will of God. Pass no day of the life-voyage without

recurrence to the things above. Let the seamen instruct us. "Behold also the ships."

One more similitude. How beautiful and grand an object is the stately ship coming into her port! She furls her sails and is made fast to her moorings, and rests upon her graceful shadow. How has she struggled and labored! What forces has she resisted, and what dangers eluded! She has not shut her watchful eye one moment, day or night, for so long. She has carried well what was committed to her. She has brought what was expected, and kept sacred the charge of life and treasure with which she was intrusted. Through the whole sphere of worldly enterprise and success, I doubt if there be another object that is looked upon by the beholders with so much elation, satisfaction, and solicitude changed to triumph and joy, as such a coming in of the good ship from her far adventures and her ocean journey. It is an imposing and a lovely sight.

But there is one other spectacle that in beauty, grandeur, and joy transcends that as far as the spiritual transcends the material, and eternity exceeds time. It is the life voyage of man completed in success and safety. It is the soul, sent forth on the deep and dangerous sea of life, and to far regions of labor and hazard, and then returned prosperous and full-freighted. It is the close of a well-spent life. The toil is over and the danger past, — the secure and peaceful haven reached, the spirit's haven of repose, — the end of cares, the end of pains, the tranquil rest of the

evening hour of a good life, passing gently through the twilight into the night of death, and the brighter dawning of the eternal day, where is rest and joy for evermore.

Brethren, we are all making the one life voyage. Here we are in the midst of struggles and toils and false lights and frequent storm and darkness. Let us be patient and vigilant and persevering. Follow conscience and gather wisdom and look to God. And as we press on with courage and hope, let us look with faith forward to the haven of our rest, to the welcome and the joy, the honor and the peace, with which our happy coming in shall be greeted by all who know and love us. Oh! precious a thousand times beyond the price of all the prizes of this world shall be the satisfactions that glow and gladden in the soul, when life's voyage closes in the triumphs of virtue and the beauty of the spirit's success! And the bark freighted with eternal interests and heavenly treasures shall come securely into its appointed haven of endless rest and joy.

1850.

IV.

JESUS AND SOLOMON.

And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. — *John* x. 23.

THE temple actually built by Solomon had been burned five hundred years before by Nebuchadnezzar when he conquered and sacked Jerusalem; but the Jews, on their return from their Syrian captivity, restored the sacred edifice on the same spot, and it was afterwards rebuilt or enlarged by King Herod just before the advent of Christ. The original structure of Solomon, however, was the type and model of the succeeding ones, and one porch in particular, a portico, or piazza on the eastern side, was preserved through all these changes in the original style, and retained the name of Solomon's Porch, covering the same ground and wearing the same aspect as the one he built. It was a monument to his memory. And now our text presents to our view Jesus walking there and meditating things of his kingdom on the spot that was vocal with the name, and sacred to the memory, of his illustrious ancestor. Jesus walking in the porch of Solomon. It brings the two names, the two persons, into conjunction. The lowly Nazarene pacing the

marble floor, as it were with the shade of the great king Solomon at his side. Perhaps, in that hour of musing in that scene, his own thought went back to the great king who had left there the record of his name and a relic of his glory. However that may have been, it is a conjunction that to our contemplation brings together the two remotely separated periods of Jewish history, the two members of the same royal family, each so great, yet so different in character and position, united by ties of blood, and of the like nationality of feeling, and a similar greatness of destiny and influence, and yet separated by a great interval of time, a total reverse of circumstances, and as wide a discrepancy of spirit and purpose as is possible between two modes of greatness, two types of power.

Solomon and Jesus; they are two representative characters, and illustrate each other by their contrasts. They are the two brightest names in Jewish history, and in that circumstance alone do they resemble each other; in all others unlike. Solomon was born in a king's palace, the favored son, nursed in pomp and luxury as heir to the throne. Jesus, though of the same lineage, was born in a stable, and brought up as a provincial peasant. Solomon flourished at the period when his country was at its height of power and glory. Industry and the arts flourished, commercial enterprise extended itself as never in the world before, and wealth poured in in bounteous streams. Luxury and splendor came in like a

tide. It was the era of magnificent architecture, and the imperial city was built over anew with temple and palaces of marble and cedar and gold. It was the high noon of pride and splendor over Jerusalem. It was the spring-tide of the nation's prosperity and might, and King Solomon upon the pinnacle of this greatness, the presiding and informing genius of it, himself the chief ornament, the shining symbol of it all. Jesus appeared at a time when all that glory had faded out and passed away, with but here and there a crumbling and melancholy memento of it left. Independence and power, wealth and magnificence all gone, the nation groaning under a foreign yoke, humbled in pride and broken in spirit, and Himself without name or influence even in the poor and hollow form of national polity that yet remained.

And while the contrast was so great in the two national conditions upon which those two great ones of Israel — Solomon and Jesus — severally looked forth from that spot, equally wide was the contrast in the moods and thoughts and aims of those two great souls as they there in their solitary walk communed with themselves, or looked forth upon the scene that lay before them. Solomon built the temple at the beginning of his reign, so we may imagine him walking and meditating there in the prime of his days. We may well conceive what were the aspirations in his country's behalf that fired his mind as he paced to and fro among those lofty columns. He feels

in himself the force of great talents, the glow of great conceptions, the opportunities of a grand position. "I will make this city rich and splendid, the centre of a mighty state. Kings and queens shall visit it to marvel and emulate. The national worship shall be magnificent. Learning and the arts shall be cultivated. The pleasures and appliances of a refined civilization shall be brought in and diffused. The merchants of the earth shall come to trade. The soil shall teem with abundance, and great revenues shall accrue. Justice shall be administered, and order maintained, and plenty spread abroad, and beauty and prosperity shall crown all these heights of the holy land." Right kingly and noble were these aspiring thoughts, as the young monarch revolved them in his clear, capacious mind, and it would seem as if they were the only great thoughts that were worthy of the scene; but not so. Behold Jesus a thousand years later walking there, and taking counsel with the aspirations of his youthful heart. No such visions of outward glory filled the imaginations or shaped and braced the resolves of his young soul, but He too could aspire loftily, and felt within Him the movings of a sublime spirit and a great purpose. "I, too, would bless and exalt this people; I would establish among them a higher kingdom, and invest this beloved city with a more enduring splendor, strength and peace; to this end was I born; for this purpose was I sent; but it is the kingdom of truth and of righteousness, and that alone, that

can suffice for my country's welfare. The reign of love and holiness must be brought in, and to this end do I consecrate myself; called to it by God's great inspiration breathing and burning within me, I must call back the people to their God. I must renew in them his blurred and broken image. I must show them the paths of a truer blessedness. I must humble their pride into piety, their turbulent worldliness into tranquil spiritual hope. No matter for this outward decay, no matter though these ancient city walls have breaches in them, no matter though this overarching temple be shorn of its former glory, no matter that a foreign ruler holds his court in yonder palace halls, and foreign soldiers defile sullenly up the sides of Zion, and along these decaying streets, — no matter for these things, if Jerusalem but knew the things that belonged to her true peace. And she shall know them. Though I die for it she shall hear the truth from my lips, the truth that shall make her free, the spirit that shall redeem her, a higher prosperity than Solomon conceived of, a glory outshining his glory, for I know by the voice of God whispering within me that a greater than Solomon is here."

Again, read the thoughts of the builder as he walked up and down in his porch, thinking what should be his share of all that greatness and happiness he was meditating for his capital. He would have a monarch's magnificence and enjoyment, and that an Eastern monarch's. He would fill his harem with beauty and wit. He would

have pleasure-gardens and parks and fish-ponds, grand houses and great works and vineyards and orchards; silver and gold he would have in great store. Men singers and women singers, and musical instruments, and all the delights of the sons of men he would have, chariots and horses, and great and small cattle, and slaves, and wine and mirth. He would exhaust the rich earth's resources for pleasure.

And then in a higher mood, — for he was no mere sensualist, but was endowed with high intellectual faculties and cravings, — he said within himself, and there was new majesty in his step and his look as he revolved the higher thought: "I will cultivate wisdom, I will gather up all the delights of learning, I will acquaint myself with the sages, I will be the chief of them. I will run through the scale of the sciences, and know the secrets of nature, know of trees from the cedar to the hyssop, and of fowl and of creeping things and of fishes." He would be a poet, and sing in the strains to which the nation's heart should vibrate forever. He would be the oracle of practical wisdom, and gather into books the profoundest maxims of all generations. So he would have pleasure and learning and fame and influence, and be great beyond all those that had dwelt in Jerusalem before him. A royal train of meditation was that to pursue beneath those arches that should bear his famous name, coupled with every conception of grandeur and renown, down to remote generations.

And now pass over the centuries, and follow the thought of Jesus as, treading the same floor, He considers what lot and reward await Him in his so different work. He expects not the cup of pleasure, but the cup of bitterness; not the crown of gold, but of thorns; not to bear a sceptre in his hands, but a cross on his shoulder; not a garden of delight in Heshbon, but of agony in Gethsemane; not palace-chambers, but less of a sheltering home than the foxes and the birds enjoy; not the garlands of fame, but the execrations of the multitude; and yet his anticipations are not few and faint. He looks for inward riches and peace. He foretastes the deeper delights of a heart sacrificing itself for love and duty, enriched with all spiritual fullness and joy, basking in the smiles of God, reposing in the Father's bosom, and looking in serene, immovable faith to the rest and the recompense laid up for Him in heavenly mansions. See Him looking forth with youthful eye from that high porch of the temple upon the people thronging below: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, and ye her sons and daughters; ye will not hear me, nor heed me, nor let me gather and bless you as I would. Ye will revile and stone me, and pursue me to the bitter end; but I will bless you and your children after you. I will lay down my life. Although brief, it shall be fruitful in enduring benefactions. I will speak my word, and though it be into unwilling ears it shall yet go forth to redeem and gladden the world, a saving power, a guiding

light, a source of gladness, and a guaranty of peace; and though I have nothing else, I shall have a heart full and warm with the love of man and the love of God."

Once more go back to the days of the great king, and behold his changed look, and listen to his altered tone as in the season of his old age he takes his solitary evening walk along the magnificent colonnade. He is an old man now, and his great career has been run; his young aspiration has grown into mature experience. The fire of his eye, the vigor of his frame, the bounding confidence of his mind, are gone, and now he reviews the work of his life, and all the labor which he had labored to do, and what he had brought to pass, and what he had gained by the way, and whither he had arrived. It is with a halting step that he moves now along the pavement that he had once trod with so brave a bearing. He no longer lifts his arm nor strikes the air at the impulse of ambition, or at the emphasis of his proud determinations; but he pauses, he stoops, he shrinks into himself, he shudders, he weeps, while he settles there the long and fast-closing account of his conscience, and recalls the illusions of life as they have dropped away, one after another, leaving in the memory only the sad record of their emptiness. Happily we can read his thoughts without drawing upon our imaginations. We learn them from the facts of his history as interpreted by his own records. As regards the welfare of his people for whom he

had designed so much and labored so long, he finds that his reign has been a splendid failure. The great things that he intended for the glory of the nation and the adornment of the capital had impoverished his subjects. Oppressed with taxes their resources are exhausted. Luxury has sapped their strength and corrupted the public taste. They are poor and enervated. The glory has cost too much. Sullen discontent prevails. He has lost his popularity. The loyal hosannas that should greet him as he passed along sound hollow. The homage of the crowd is constrained and reluctant. The voice of moody threatening is heard. He knows that the evil days are at hand, that the retribution of his mistakes shall be visited upon his successors, that scarcely can things go on through his day, and scarcely shall his day be closed when his kingdom, which he was to make perpetual, shall be rent in twain, and the strength and glory of Israel depart forever, and these temple walls and yonder palace-heights begin to crack and shake, weakening from year to year in readiness for the spoiler's hand. He knows, through that profound sagacity which gave him the title of the wisest of men, that, though his countrymen of after ages, in the weakness and blindness of national pride, would boast of him and of his splendid works and worship his memory, the great monarch, the type of an illustrious epoch, yet the truly wise must see that his wisdom had been folly, his glory an illusion, his reign of magnificence and luxury the

ruinous beginning of a fearful end. So miserably ends the dream of his generous and vaulting ambition, and it is no cheerful retrospect that now engages his meditative hour.

And then he must review his own career and character, and he does it, and he left behind a melancholy record of it. He has realized his youthful visions of pleasure and self-indulgence, fathomed and exhausted the Epicurean philosophy ages before Epicurus was born, tried every act of enjoyment more thoroughly than mortal ever did, and the whole of that portion of his life has left but one feeling, that of bitterness and disgust, and he had but one word left for it all, so mournful a word to speak in review of a responsible and irrecoverable life, — "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

And he has tried all other resources for happiness that his genius could suggest, or power command. He has tried wealth and splendor, and increased his goods more than all that were before him in Jerusalem, and that was a failure; "Vanity of vanities," is still all he can say. He has tried labor, toiling with energy and zeal to promote his country's advancement, but all with an earthly spirit and for earthly ends, and no good had come of it, and that was vanity of vanities. He had mastered the nobler achievements of learning, run through the great circle of the sciences, gathered into his mind all the treasures of wisdom; orator, poet, and author he had been, and renowned philosopher, but to no purpose.

These things had not purified his heart, nor elevated his soul, nor ennobled his life, and even these to the old man's fading eye were fruitless and worthless, and only like the rest, vanity of vanities. No true felicity had he found; his experiments had all failed. No man ever tried so fully all the sources of worldly happiness, nor ever published with so much emphasis and sadness the utter insufficiency and failure of them all. And now, all he can do to retrieve these fatal errors of his life is to spend the closing days of it in bearing his humiliating testimony to the folly of all he had devised, and the emptiness of all he had achieved. There remained to him but the poor consolation of calling upon posterity to take warning by his example, and of preaching with his latest breath that higher wisdom which his whole life had belied, and which he had now discovered too late to profit by. There is a sad sincerity, an impressive earnestness, in those closing words of his last chapter: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." "Let us hear," he says, "the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." These are the thoughts, we may readily suppose, with which the proudest monarch of Israel takes his last sad walk in the porch of his splendid temple.

A thousand years later his lineal descendant takes his last walk there and reviews his life. He too has done as he had proposed to Himself. He has kept his early vow and done the work which He had accepted in pious faith from his Father's hands to do. He has lived a life of purity and love. He has sowed the seeds of truth and virtue in the world. He has kindled a flame of renovating piety on earth that shall spread and never be quenched. He has planted the tree of life. He has revealed the Father. He has watered the parched deserts of the human mind with the living water, and now his career is closing, and no matter though it be in darkness and pain, He has nothing to regret, no errors to repine for, nor retrieve. All is light within and before Him. God draws nearer and nearer. His trust mounts up into joy and dear assurance. He can leave his fond legacy of perfect peace to his friends. He had tasted the sorrows of a hard, sad life, but they were expanding now to his thought into the glories of life eternal. His converse is with his God. "I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self. And now I come to thee." And so with the ineffable peace of God in his heart we seem to see Him descending the steps of the porch of Solomon, as Solomon had descended them before Him, and passing on, not to a regal court and its splendid misery, but to his cross and to his heaven.

These two illustrious persons are still, and forever, the types and representatives of the two great coördinate departments of human tendencies and interests, the worldly and the spiritual. Both are great. They both take hold of certain profound and indestructible elements of human nature, and both command a hearing and a following, and both rightfully. Solomon is still the ideal of a great man, the impersonation of the natural desires of worldly enterprise, of worldly wisdom, of ambition for wealth and power and learning and influence and fame. And all these are deeply implanted elements of our nature which we cannot and would not abolish or ignore. We would not dare to pass sentence of condemnation upon the very frame of our being, the courses of nature, the provisions of God, and all the activities and industries and ornaments and achievements and delights of this world-wide civilization. We may and we must magnify and follow him, the Hebrew king and sage, but we must do it with a rigid restraint and limitation. It is a dangerous path, and to follow it in an unchecked career brings us, as it brought him, to shame and failure, and will wring from our hearts, as from his, the mournful confession, the comfortless lamentation from out of the aching void of an impoverished soul, — "vanity of vanities." Pleasure will pall and disgust, wealth burden and canker the soul, success and aggrandisement reveal the deeper poverty and humiliation, and labor come to naught, and ambition be stripped

of its illusions, and the senses turn inward for our tormenting, and our selfishness, when passion is stilled and the race is run, stands revealed in its native nakedness and ugliness. The worldly life unrestrained and unsatisfied must one day, even to our own eyes, bring the pain of discovered delusion and the sense of a wasted life, and the anguish of a troubled conscience and a gnawing remorse. Oh, beware of that life whose last forced word is "Vanity of vanities!" it is too late to alter it, too late for anything but to confess and mourn and vainly warn another.

But from amid these worldly pursuits and tendencies that so hurry us on in a worldly career, look up to that other Leader and King and truer sage, — the soul's king, the teacher of a higher wisdom, the pattern of a higher life. Submit to his yoke, open the heart to his influence, keep his law of love and purity. Be his Father your Father, his life your life.

Abroad in the week-day world we must in many things make the elder sage of Israel our type, and pay him the homage of our admiration and our following. The cares and pleasures, the toils and enterprises and shows of the world must engage our thoughts and energies; but they do it too much, do they not? engrossing our energies, our affections, too much, leading us too strenuously on to that result which we shall find, as Solomon found, is but vanity and vexation of spirit. At least, then, when we gather here to worship in the name of that greater one of Israel,

how does it become us to strive and pray that his spirit may take larger possession of our spirits, and may lift us into sympathy and communion with his thought, his faith, his feeling; that our pleasures may be limited and hallowed by religion, our wealth and influence and learning consecrated by noble uses, our activity dignified with rectitude, and our selfishness sanctified by love and piety, so that our last words and thoughts and memories be not of the vanities that have cheated us and the glories that have mocked us, but of the blessedness and blamelessness of a well-spent life, the peace of an unworldly heart, the riches that are incorruptible, and the glory that fadeth not away, but shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day of heaven.

1854.

V.

ALMOST AND ALTOGETHER.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds —*Acts* xxvi. 28, 29.

THIS Agrippa was one of the Herods, that bad race of Jewish kings. The first of them was Herod the Great, whose reign was marked by many horrible deeds. He murdered his own wife and his two sons, and it was he who ordered the massacre of the children of Bethlehem in our Saviour's infancy. He was as able as he was bad. The next of them was his son, Herod Antipas, who ruled over Galilee, inheriting but a part of his father's dominions. It was this one who slew John the Baptist to please the daughter of Herodias. He was finally deposed by the Roman emperor, and died in banishment at Lyons, in Gaul, or France. The next of the line was Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, who was one of the children of Herod the Great killed by his father. He had spent his early life at Rome, and is said to have had the chief influence in the education of Caligula, one of the worst of the Roman emperors. He became king of the whole of

Palestine. It is he of whom it is written in the twelfth chapter of the Acts, that he "stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church; and he killed James the brother of John with the sword; and because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also." His awful death is described in the same chapter. His son and successor was the Agrippa of our text, who was accordingly the great-grandson of Herod the Great. He reigned, as they all did, under vassalage to the Roman emperors. He appears to have had the family traits. His character was a cross of the Jew and the Roman; but he lived to be old, and was the only one of the race who died a natural death. Paul, a prisoner, accused by the Jews of many crimes against their law and religion, is permitted to appear before this king Herod Agrippa to plead his cause. Ever faithful to the interests of his great mission, he fails not, while pleading for himself, to plead for Christ and his gospel. We have his appeal on record, and we know how earnest and eloquent it was. Agrippa was moved. His Roman indifference and Jewish stubbornness were shaken. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," he says. Paul replies as in the text. The reply unites the adroitness of an advocate and the majesty of an Apostle: "I would to God that thou," — but he was a subject and would be courteous, and therefore he says, — "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am,

except," — and here he spread out his manacled hands, as it were in appeal to their justice and their sympathy, — "except these bonds," these fetters. He would wish them no evil, no discomfort nor disgrace, — polite and kindly always. And yet for a man in his condition, hated, hunted, accused of crime, a helpless prisoner, a member of a despised sect everywhere put down, — for him, addressing those royal personages, the grandees of the court in their lordly estate, — for him to dare to say in the tone of kindness, that he wished for them the honor and happiness of being such as he was, a Christian! Was it not impudent presumption, that air of superiority? He superior to them? and in affecting to wish them well, wishing they were such as he? Will they not have him scourged out of their presence for the mocking insult? Not at all. It does not appear that they took offense, but the king spoke favorably of his cause immediately after. No, he was their superior, and he felt it, and they felt it for the time. The words that he spoke, the great truth that filled and inspired him, the spiritual courage, confidence, and hope that animated him set him aloft, and they, from their low condition of mental darkness and earthly pride, looked up to him. Even the king sat affected, humbled, and rebuked in the presence of one so much greater and higher than himself. Paul in his chains was the greatest presence there, and silently confessed for such. The nobleness and majesty of a soul strong in truth and the right, and wearing the regalia of

great thoughts, always vindicate themselves and attest their own preëminence. The splendor of earthly royalty pales before them. There was no impudence or insult in the Apostle's wish; he spoke down to them, as he needs must from his higher position; he invited them up to his side, and his words sounded to them for the moment like the gracious condescension of a superior, and a benediction from above. He was the true king at that sitting and bore himself like what he was, and they were awed down to their proper place. The day before they might have scorned such humiliation; the day after they may have remembered it with mortification; but in that present hour their own souls' deep consciousness compelled them to look up to their superior and let him condescend to them.

But the text suggests another point which I especially wish to present to you. "Almost thou persuadest me," said Agrippa. Paul saw the fatal short-coming of that word, almost. He would take little or no encouragement from it, does not exult as if anything had been gained to his good cause, does not pause to congratulate the king on his accession to the side of truth and holiness. He knew that *almost* amounted to nothing, and so he instantly says, "I would that thou wert not only almost, but altogether a Christian." And this little dialogue of two sentences between the Apostle and the king may be found full of a moral instruction for us, and it should lead us to consider adequately the vast difference there is in all

matters of religious conviction and moral decision between almost and altogether, and between the two states of mind and character which they severally indicate.

In all human affairs that word *almost* connects itself, whether in the great things of history or the small ones of common life, with the uncounted and ever-recurring instances of failure and defeat, disappointment and mortification, baffled prospects and evil issues. So constantly are men coming close upon great and desirable results, but not quite up to them, just missing them; so many risings against tyranny have almost succeeded but not quite, and have left it stronger than ever; so many victories have been almost won, but just missed, and become total defeats; so many men have almost achieved some great thing, but stopped just short of it and done nothing and sunk into insignificance; so many men in places of power and influence have almost made up their minds, and taken their stand for some great principle or measure that would have changed the aspect of the world and the course of history, but have faltered at the last stage and fallen away into nothing at all. There is no nation but has, at some point of its history, almost taken a stand or done a deed that would have reversed its subsequent history; no conqueror but has been almost conquered; no victim but has almost triumphed. How many are the adventures of world-wide importance that have almost succeeded, but not quite, and so passed into

nothingness and oblivion. How many men may we suppose before Newton and Copernicus arrived almost at the discovery, — within a hair's breadth of it, — of the law of gravitation and of the movement of the heavenly bodies, but not quite, and therefore have never been heard of. Whenever any great discovery or invention is hit upon, we cannot think what numbers of minds had arrived at the very verge of it, over and over, and long before. How many men have been almost great orators, great poets, or statesmen, or warriors, with all the gifts and opportunities to make them such except for some single and trivial physical infirmity or mental defect, or some little mistake or untoward circumstance, and, through that small exception have failed entirely of success and renown.

And in more personal affairs, when from amid disappointed hopes and unhappy circumstances we look back and contemplate the brighter prospects and happier possibilities that once lay before us, we cannot but see how near we have often come to a better lot, and almost touched the goal of our desires, and the almost seemed then but the least space separating us from that goal; but we see now that that nearness was no better for us than a thousand miles of distance.

But we must not permit these worldly reflections to detain us any longer from the points more akin to that which Paul pressed upon Agrippa. It is in the moral and spiritual affairs of individual minds that this fatal *almostness*, so flattering

in its promise and so treacherous and humiliating in its results, exhibits itself most frequently and mournfully. When, in our seasons of humble and regretful retrospection, we think how far short we have come of what was possible to us of a blameless, useful, and noble life, and how far character falls below the soul's own acknowledged standard, and how poor is the result and outcome of all our young opportunities and capabilities, — what thoughtful man does not remember whole hosts of good deeds which from time to time he has almost done, that if done would have been to him an exceeding wealth of righteousness, — and right decisions which many a time he has been upon the point of making, so as to feel quite sure that he should make them, and only faltered strangely, he knows not how, at the last moment and in the single final word, — decisions which, if he had made absolutely, would have given to his whole career a noble direction, — and high inspirations of virtue which poured in upon him from above, and seemed to take possession of him and lift him up into the mount, and *almost* became the very law and spirit of his being and activity, and would have redeemed him and shaped him anew, but that somehow they began to fade just at the moment of their promised consummation? and the recollection of his failures and neglects is the more bitter for the thought of these frequent close approaches to a better way and condition.

Of worldly disappointments the most torment-

ing are those in which we have to think of the prizes of life which we once had within our grasp, and might have put forth the hand and made them our own, and just then, through some feebleness or thoughtlessness, let them slip from us and depart. Or the times when we were just ready and perfectly able to set our foot on the promised land of our desires and hopes, and should have possessed it unalterably, when some chance influence or weak indecision lured or turned our steps aside, and it was lost forever. It is a keen misery to have failed just at the very point of possible and assured success. And in the high moral issues of life it deepens humiliation and sharpens the sting of remorse for our failings and short-comings, to call to mind those frequent crises when we almost made the choice, or took the step that would have set us aloft and spared us so much loss and lapsing and shame. How strange and sad it seems that our wisdom and our strength should have so failed us in those critical moments when it needed so little more, almost nothing more, to have set all right and made all safe. The most fallen men, fallen lowest in intemperance, profligacy, unprincipled dealing, moral imbecility, social infamy, spiritual deadness, — whenever conscience and memory arouse themselves they cannot but think with great anguish of those most favored seasons of their experience when they had light and power and high hope and an open way and favorable influences, when they almost sheltered themselves within the

very ark of the Lord, and can only wonder now, with sharp and unavailing regret, how it was they missed it, and why they did not make the one last effort, or persevere in it the little moment longer that was requisite. They who are fallen lowest remember the heights of virtue, honor, and peace, whose shining they once beheld, and whose pinnacle they once almost touched. And are we not all in some sense and some degree fallen? Who is what he feels he might have been, and what these years of gracious opportunity should have made him? Who does not look up, and look back from his present state, to some better aspirations that he was once on the point of realizing, and some nobler vows that he once almost made and almost kept? Who has not been so near to becoming his own truer and better self, taking his right place, entering upon his right work, and mounting to his appropriate range of principles and motives, so near to it as to feel ready sometimes to lie down prostrate in the ashes, with humiliation and repentance, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner?"

When Paul, with his keen insight and moral discrimination, saw that Agrippa was deeply moved, and heard him say he was almost persuaded, and saw the powers of truth and error, of good and evil, balancing themselves in his disturbed mind, saw that he was almost persuaded, he saw also, what he had seen in a thousand others, and what he had probably seen in his own past experience, — though he was the sort of man, we should think,

to have had fewer experiences of that kind than almost anybody, — he saw, I say, in his royal auditor, how utterly delusive and futile that *almost* persuasion was. And we are but dull learners in the school of experience if we have not learned the treacherous fallacy of all hopes based on convictions not quite decided, intentions not quite fulfilled, positions not firmly assumed, strong feelings not quite erected into laws of the soul and principles of action. The dividing space between almost and altogether often looks very narrow, but as often it is a wide untraveled sea; as often it is a great fixed gulf, on the edge of which men pause and shrink from the one necessary leap, and lose all the way they have laboriously traveled up to it, — a gulf deep and broad enough to receive and hold a universe full of baffled expectations and broken vows. It is the sepulchre of half the world's brave and good intents. It is a gulf that smokes with the fires of remorseful memory, and resounds with the wailings of troubled consciences and blighted hopes and comfortless retrospections.

To bridge over or to close up this fatal chasm between the almost and the altogether as it yawned there in the halting mind of Agrippa, was the one thought of Paul when he replied to what seemed so great a concession, so encouraging a word, on the king's part. If he took any encouragement from it it was disappointed. Agrippa stopped at the almost and never went farther; turned quite back, doubtless, as soon as the Apos-

tle had gone his way, and the sound of his voice had died away on the ear. It is but too commonly so. Whenever one says, "I am almost convinced," "I almost wish," "I am almost resolved upon this or that thing," there is but a very slight chance that anything will come of it. He may say it in all sincerity, and think that he really is on the point of consummating the wish or purpose; but the very word *almost* indicates that he is pausing at that same chasm, hesitates at the critical moment, and will get no farther on. Whoso stops to congratulate himself upon the almost is in truth farther than ever from the altogether. What Paul prayed for in such abrupt earnestness in behalf of his one hearer, or that little court circle, the gospel which he proclaimed is ever striving to accomplish in behalf of us and all mankind, to get us across that chasm which we are so frequently coming up to, and prevent our halting there under the fatal delusion that a goal is as good as reached when it is almost reached.

Every reader of the New Testament must have remarked how absolute it is in its requirements, — how positive, thorough-going, uncompromising in the spirit of its commands. It never abates a jot of its high requisitions, never brings down its standard of holiness to meet us half way, or compound with us for any short-coming; attaches but little value to any partial faith, but requires a believing with the whole heart; countenances no exceptions to the law of rectitude and purity, ad-

mits no reservations in the soul's allegiance to the right and the divine, proposes nothing less than the soul's unqualified self-devotion to things excellent and obligatory, — claims the entire heart's fealty; this is the characteristic of the Christian religion, and it may seem a rigid and merciless one, not accommodating itself sufficiently to our infirmities, and all the conflicting circumstances of our position in the world, — too exacting, too uncompromising. But not so. All this is simply a clear-sighted recognition of the almost infinite difference between the half and the whole; aye, and between ninety-nine hundredths and the whole, between the almost and the altogether. The gospel wants to form in man a positive and decisive character; it wants to supply that one link so often missing, between aspiration and execution, between desire and its realization, between purpose and performance, between faith and a life of faith, between effort and success in every noble aim. It would save us from being flattered and deceived by mere good feeling and good intents which so love to play around good deeds and see how near they can come to them without touching them. It would make men something positively and consistently, and enable them in their self-judgments to see what they are actually, and not almost, to bridge for us that same gulf between the almost and the altogether. Would God it might do so; we might well pray for ourselves Paul's prayer for Agrippa. We know in how many things and

how often we need to take that last step, but fail to take it; and while we think we have as good as accomplished the journey, might, in fact, about as well never have started at all. Our half faiths do not accomplish for us the ends of faith. Half resolutions are little better than none; to be almost persuaded results in nothing but to be hardened against so deep an impression even as that the next time the influence returns. In the moral concerns of life, "almost" is a mental anodyne and a great heart-hardener. To be almost a Christian avails little more for the soul's salvation than to be quite an infidel or a heathen.

It is our high spiritual business of self-education to abolish this fatal almost, and not let it be such an habitual stopping-place and point of return, but to pass by it, and, without halting, take the one step more; to cultivate and practice entireness of right persuasion, absoluteness of right decisions and moral resolutions, singleness of heart, completeness of just purposes; the spirit that goes the whole length of every right way, and springs to the very goal of holy desire, and devotes itself in total unreservedness to the great aims of existence, so as to be and to do, not only almost, but altogether, what the will of God and the better promptings of the heart, and all the interests of life and the soul's present dignity and peace and everlasting welfare demand of us to do and to be.

1856.

VI.

TEKEL.

And this is the writing that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. — *Daniel* v. 25.

Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. — *Daniel* v. 27.

THESE words sound to us strange and meaningless, and they looked so to the doomed monarch who was bidden to read them on his palace wall at Babylon. The chapter in Daniel from which the text is taken, illustrated as it has often been by the artists, has made the story of Belshazzar familiar. He appears to have been a dissolute and irreligious king, unfaithful to his great stewardship of power from the King of kings. Misgovernment, sensuality, and all moral abandonment had enervated his empire, and its dissolution was approaching. His own bad career was hastening to its close; the measure of his iniquity was full; it was too late to retrieve himself; the downward course of things could not be changed; the ruin was too near its consummation to be checked. And even if the coming events had not been beyond human control, he had lost the desire and the moral power, it is likely, to turn the engulfing tide. With the recklessness and desperation which are but too nat-

ural and too common under such circumstances, he prepared a banquet of unusual splendor. He would drown thought, he would defy fate; he would keep up the semblance of power and glory, and, amid festive excitements and a regal magnificence, cheat himself and others with the shows of grandeur and security. To signalize his daring defiance of Heaven, he brought the golden vessels of religion from their sanctuary to grace his impious feast with the sacrilege. And there he sat with his magnificent court in voluptuous abandonment. Who so great, so proud, so happy, to all outward seeming, as he and his?

But under that defiant attitude there were secret misgivings; amid the notes of revelry there were inarticulate whispers of the gathering storm, — a shadow, unrecognized, but chill and darkening, had fallen on all those hearts, which no height of mirth could quite dispel. The hour of doom was about to strike, and that stroke never comes without some secret sense of warning preceding it. One uninvited guest would come in, in spite of royal prohibitions, and sit down at the table, and even lean heavily on the royal bosom, ignored but not to be expelled, — and that was fear, — a certain fearful looking for judgment to come. It was a time for portents, and a portent came. Any one of those drunken and slumbering consciences, suddenly awaking, roused by an overmastering sense of guilt and danger, would have sufficed to bring it in, and it came, the portent. It was the king's smitten conscience and boding

heart that brought it in, and endowed it with substance and form. He saw it amid the glancing lights and shadows on the wall; he saw something, as it were part of a man's hand moving there, as though it were writing something. He alone saw it so far as appears from the narrative, — but he saw it. What was it, and what did it mean, he demanded? for he could not withdraw his eyes, he could not see or think of anything else. What was it, and the interpretation of it? he demanded, like one who knew not what it was to be disobeyed. None could tell. Probably none but he saw anything peculiar, or if they felt within themselves any of the guilty fears which they read in his blanched countenance, it would not have been courtly to express them, and they were dumb. But he could not be put off, and he sent for his learned men; but they could not see what the spectral hand wrote, nor, probably, whether it wrote anything. All their science was at fault, and they could answer nothing. Then the queen, seeing that the king could not be put off, advised him to send for the Hebrew captive, Daniel, a wise man, of an excellent spirit and knowledge, she said. And he came, and was commanded to interpret the omen, with the promise of great reward. He scouted the reward, but he was ready to interpret. He knew what the writing was, or what it ought to have been if there had been any. We are not told that there were any visible words written, but only a part of a hand writing, that is, making a motion as if writ-

ing. If there had been visible words the king could have read them himself, or if not he, his wise men could. But Daniel could interpret the moving hand; he knew what should have been written. He could read it in the frightened look and quaking form of the conscience-stricken king. He could read it in the voluptuous scene around him, the type of a sensual reign, a corrupt administration and a dissolving state. He was a prophet of the Lord, and he knew what the writing should be because he knew that that royal career had been one continuous insult to the holy God, and a breaking of all the laws of eternal right and sacred duty. He saw about him all the signs of a crumbling dynasty and a closing life. Voices of judgment were ringing in his ear through all the polluted air. He knew the purport of those unwritten words, and he dared to speak it, and he alone, not those wise men and soothsayers, — if they had known what to say they would have said nothing. They were courtiers, and not accustomed to speak unwelcome words in the ear of despotism; but the prophets of Israel were not men of a stamp to tremble before kings, or stand dumb in the presence of any earthly majesty. They were bold, bold even unto death for God and his righteousness. And there the brave man stood. You may have seen him as represented in the picture of a great artist, — or if not that, you can imagine him as the narrative represents him. He is the true king in the scene. On his brow, in his form, you see the real

majesty of the piece. Truth and courage make him more than regal. He alone trembles not with any heart-sinking. All eyes and ears wait upon him with reverent dread. He will not spare them, — they were stern men, those old prophets. He was prompt to answer: "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another, yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation." And then he proceeds with a brief summary of the affairs of the kingdom, relates to the king the iniquities of his father before him, and then his own. Thou has lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified, and therefore this hand has appeared to thee writing. It is the forerunner of thy doom; it comes in response to thy guilty conscience, to proclaim the divine condemnation upon thee. And this is the writing that was written, — words which thou couldst not see, but I will declare to thee, this, — "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." These words put into English would be thus: "Numbered, weighed, to be divided," or "destroyed." Dreadful announcement of a dreadful doom! It was as if Jehovah had spoken through the lips of his prophet. There was no protest, no appeal. The guilty heart bowed in compulsory and unresisting acquiescence. That was the true interpretation, and all knew it. Those words, if not written there on the wall, stood visibly written on the king's brow, and amid all the mockeries of

that impious feast. They were stamped all over the fated city and kingdom; the fiery letters glared out in the sky like a decree of God, as they were read and recognized of all men as soon as they were spoken. That very night they were verified in the death of Belshazzar and the disruption of his empire.

The fate of a profligate and impious king, in that old time, and the political fortunes of an empire that passed away so long ago, are of no interest to us, and I should not have brought them to notice, were it not that in that festive scene, the crisis of a king's and a nation's fall, the inspired prophet proclaimed an eternal principle of the divine government over men, and a law of God that stands unchanged through all the ages, and is executed for weal or woe in every soul of man. This principle, considered as a universal principle, stands expressed in the second word of that awful handwriting. Tekel — "thou art weighed in the balances" — as much as to say: O king, while thou hast been glorying in thy power and pomp, and rioting in thy self-indulgence, and drinking in the sweet draughts of flattery, and saying in thy self-sufficiency: "Behold how great and strong I am!" all the time God has been weighing thee in his secret balance. Slowly He has adjusted the beam, and patiently He has waited to see if thou wouldst be a true man; to see if there was worth in thee; any solidity beneath the shining exterior; any fidelity to thy position; any obedience to the law

that is higher than thine own. He has waited and watched, but in vain. Thou art found wanting. The beam has been going up slowly, surely, until now, till it strikes, and the weighing is done, and thou art judged. The decree has gone out: "Wanting, empty, worthless; thy kingdom is taken from thee; thine earthly probation is ended. The accumulating providences have gathered to a head against thee, and this night settles the account. Weighed — weighed, and wanting!"

All men are weighed. It is a process forever going on with respect to every man. All hollowness and falseness is detected and exposed. There is no concealment or impunity for any sin. We may deceive ourselves with our own false pretensions, but the scales of God are unerring, and always hang poised for our weighing. There is not always a prophet at our side with the inspiration and the courage to declare the fearful tally; but God makes it known to us, and we can read it off if we will. In several ways it is made manifest how our accounts stand in the scales of God. First, there are external and physical indications. Some sins are a direct breaking of God's natural laws, and these, with some others, have their physical penalties, — outward signs and consequences of our transgression and short-coming. There are many bodily sicknesses and pains, worldly woes and calamities and disappointments that come in judgment of sin, — the natural laws avenging themselves upon the breaker of them. A great deal that we suffer in the world is the

result, direct or indirect, of our law-breaking unfaithfulness to our position and our duty. Unhappy providences gather round and follow after our evil deeds and neglects, and indicate palpably the weighing and the wanting. But this is not a sure, a complete, or a sufficient tally. Events often delay in their coming; they are determined by many other causes than human merit or blame; they are not always a retribution, but sometimes only a chastening. And there are many sins of such a nature that they break no physical laws, and bring no physical penalties. There are ways of ungodliness that are perfectly compatible with health and all outward prosperity and enjoyment. The events that befall us do but partially interpret the unseen writing on the wall.

There is another interpretation of it given in the moral judgments of mankind. The world weighs us. Every man is weighed by his friends and enemies, his neighbors, the community, posterity, — a larger or a smaller circle, according to the sphere he occupies. And this is a part of God's weighing, because the judgments of men, so far as they are enlightened and honest, proceed from those attributes which He possesses in perfection, and a limited endowment of which he has bestowed upon his children. It is an imperfect judgment, liable to mistakes and delays, liable to be warped by prejudice and to be corrupted in many ways; and yet, on the whole, and in the long run, it is deep-searching, and fearfully just. The false man gets marked and becomes

an object of distrust. Empty pretension, swell and flaunt as it may, is seen through at length, be it ever so solid looking. It is difficult for a man to pass long for more than he is, or other than he is. Men do track out the wrong-doer with a terrible persistency, and usually run him down at last, and bring him to the light and punish him with their laws or their hatred or their scorn. The mask of hypocrisy and deceit gets worn and torn amid the rough ways of the world. Ill-gotten gain becomes, even to human eyes, but a shining badge of dishonor, a standing witness of the sin. The sensual vices plant a disgusting look upon the face, and whoso runs may read it, and read it never with respect, always with loathing. Is there cold-heartedness, selfishness, meanness in a man? all hearts instinctively discern its hateful presence, and in God's stead, and almost with his unerringness, weigh it, and mark it for what it is. An Apostle has said it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment. And so it is a small thing when that judgment is perverted, hasty, and opposed to God's judgment; but when it is a just judgment, and agrees with God's judgment, then it is a great thing, and a terrible thing. It is an interpretation of the higher judgment; it is a foreshadowing of the judgment to come. The human heart has instincts that enable it, with an unreasoning sagacity, to pronounce beforehand the decrees of God, and follow the mysterious hand that writes upon the wall. The heartfelt, the deliberate, the average condemna-

tion of one's fellow-men is dreadfully sincere, and has a frightful tone of finality in it. What Daniel was to Belshazzar, such are all good and right-minded and plain-spoken men to every evil-doer. There are prophets still all over the world, — not with the name or bearing of a prophet, but their consenting words and thoughts of moral judgment have the same divine authority in them, the same voice of doom in them. Do your neighbors look upon you with distrust? Do your friends fall away from you, and good men have fears for you? Is your wife sad and foreboding about you? Do your children, loving you, wonder at your ways? or, fearing and hating you, wish you out of their way, or themselves out of yours? Is it so? Then examine yourself. It may be that you are misjudged and ill-used; but it looks more as if these hearts, so pained and alienated, were the appointed balances in which God is weighing you, and will find you wanting.

But this human judgment is, after all, but a partial and fallible tally of the divine weighing. It may judge us too harshly or too leniently. Like outward providences, it is but a proximate expression of the exact justice of God. The truest register of the divine weighing is in the soul itself. The moral laws of God are executed within. When a man is weighed and found wanting, his heaviest punishment consists in the wanting — the not having and the not being — that which is essential to the dignity and enjoyment of existence. When purity, worth, honor,

rectitude, and love are gone out of the soul, there is no need of further punishment. The wrath of God is complete in the mere absence of these things. There is vacancy, coldness, hollowness within, with aching regrets, bitter memories, shame and fear, the sense of a wasted life, the blankness of the future prospect, and there is nothing that can add much to the sharpness of this penalty, — to be found wanting, to have come short, — unfaithfulness, waste, internal death. The good affections, the sense of God, the great hopes, the great satisfactions of being, perished away. Wanting — all guilt, uselessness, worthlessness resolves itself into that. Weighed and wanting.

And this method of the divine judgment is unerring and complete. There hangs the quick, sure, everlasting balance. We must all mount that swinging scale, — nay, we are in it from first to last, poised, weighed. The result is subject to no mistake. Earthly prosperities and adversities are but slight make-weights that quickly disappear. In this weighing, appearances are not reckoned, — the inner reality alone tells. The man is weighed, not the accidents of his life, not even his actions, but himself, — thou, *thou* art weighed in the balances! In God's eye we pass for what we are, and only that. We cannot be more or less. We cannot weight the scales, nor bind down the beam, nor wrest it from its pivot, nor alter the score. A fearful weighing! And the hand comes out on the wall to write down

the results. The conscience sees it. All the law and the prophets, with one voice, interpret it; all experience verifies it. Whoso is wanting will find it written there simply, — "Wanting"— "Tekel." It is the doom of dooms. "Weighed," — it is the law of laws.

But the working of this great law is not merely awful in its exactness and solemn in its warnings. It is also comforting and full of encouragement. The weighing is really just, — thank God for that assurance! It takes into account the things which the world cannot see, the good no less than the evil, that is hidden from earthly eyes. God looketh upon the heart, and every good feeling that throbs there, though it be without an adequate expression; every holy desire that fails of visible accomplishment, every just purpose that gets hindered, every secret repentance, every hidden tear, is known to God, and goes into the balance. He takes no technical advantage of his children. He considereth our infirmities, He remembereth that we are dust. He knows every circumstance of abatement and extenuation. His eye pierces beyond the action to the inmost motive. There is a hidden worth and beauty in many a heart where the world cannot see it; but God sees it and weighs it. He does not stand by the stream, but at the fountain. The good we mean, though it be not done, if it be in our hearts to do it, in his sight it is done and weighed. The prayer that is not spoken in men's hearing obtains access to his ear. If, when we are worse

than we seem, He notes it, so also, in so far as we are better than we seem, He notes that. He can see some hidden soul of goodness in those whom men cast out and condemn. Look to Jesus Christ, his son and representative on earth. Follow Him in his gentle, uplifting intercourse with the fallen and despised. Listen to his gracious words of good cheer, and catch his inspirations of comfort and hope, and learn how loving, as well as strict, are the judgments of God. Be glad that the final weighing is not man's, who knows so little, but God's who knows all.

Reflect, then, with solemn dread, and yet with hopeful cheer, on this great weighing. The hand that comes out on the wall writes fearful words, yet not such always, nor for all; words of peace, also, and great encouragement, — words of mercy as well as of judgment. There is a stern Daniel to interpret them for the guilty conscience; but there is also a gentle Christ to interpret them to the tender and stricken heart. There is a voice in the universe that cries, "Woe, woe," to the wicked and unclean; but there is another voice that cries, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem."

1858.

VII.

CHRISTIAN MANLINESS—DOING AND STANDING.

And having done all, to stand. — *Ephesians* vi. 13.

I TAKE this language as indicating the method and characteristics of a true Christian manliness. Nobody was ever more competent than Paul to deliver precepts and furnish texts on that subject. He was himself so brave and true, and strong and patient, could act with so much vigor and endure with so much heroism; so erect in self-respect, yet so piously humble of heart; so eminently manly, and yet so tenderly and meekly Christian, that we might take him as the type of a Christian manliness; and none ever spoke, better worth listening to, when he points out and inculcates the traits that constitute it. We have presented here, in the text, one phase, and that a most comprehensive one, of the manly character, according to his conception of it. We will hold it up to our own view a while, if possibly by the contemplation of it we may rise up and grow into a better appreciation of it.

Having done all, to stand. Putting these words into a fitting paraphase, the Apostle seems to say

to us: Do your best in any matter which you have to do with, and then calmly abide the issue. Use your best faculties and your best light, to get at the truth in matters that concern you, and having done that in all diligence and good faith, respect your own convictions, declare them boldly, and abide by them firmly. Do your whole duty in any exigency, and then keep yourself clear of all nervous anxiety about the consequences. Perform your part in any work that falls to you, and tranquilly leave the rest to God. Secure a good conscience, make as sure as you can of the right, and having secured that, plant yourself on it, take your stand upon it, set down your foot and hold up your head, unconcerned as to what may come of it, — unmoved, unshaken, come of it what will. This is the interpretation of the text, and if we consider it well, and make full application of it to actual life, I do not see but it exhibits pretty fully the style of manliness that we would cultivate and acquire. We do not always analyze it, or name it, but we do always render homage to it when we see it; we feel the dignity of it, and see that it constitutes a grand superiority among men, makes a man verily a man, and that is a great character to attain to, and a rare one, too, in its completeness. We see nothing better than approximations to it, falling short of our idea, indeed, yet complete and noble enough to inspire reverence and excite emulation.

You perceive there are two branches to this

sort of character, or two classes of constituent elements in it, each necessary to the other, and both necessary to the result; and I know not in which there is most apt to be a deficiency, — they both seem equally difficult to attain. I suppose the difference is in persons, — some succeed or fail most in one, and others in the other, and yet there is no very good success in one without an equal success in the other. Certainly neither alone produces a very satisfactory style of man.

A complete manliness, then, as our text exhibits it, is of two parts, corresponding to what would be called, in natural philosophy, dynamics and statics, — the first consisting of moving forces, power in action, — the second of stability and equilibrium of mental position when the time of action is past, — a true standing still, poised by the laws of spiritual gravitation, strength in its reposing posture. This latter part, as it is more of the nature of a result, the final aspect and outcome of manliness, deserves to be considered as the principal point in the character, while the other may be regarded, in philosophic language, as the fundamental condition precedent. The standing still is the last and highest position of man, only there must have been previously strong activity, persistent and forceful movement, to enable him to stand so weightily, firmly, with dignity and ease. When an artist wishes to represent a great man, in marble or bronze, to stand for ages as the impersonation of his hero, he usually prefers to exhibit him

standing in an attitude of repose. He knows that a position of repose is the highest; that that is manliness triumphant and crowned; that man looks greater standing still than with his muscles on the stretch, in immediate action. But he knows, too, that he must make his marble man look as if he had a right to stand still, and as if he could stand so forever without being wearied in himself, or moved by another. He considers well where the vertical line through the centre of gravity will fall; he studies the law of gravitation; he is anxious to satisfy the eye with the appearance of perfect balance. The muscles are not in action, but he lets you see that they have been powerfully exercised, or else the man could not stand so, — so firm and with so much ease.

The statue of Washington in the State House exhibits the father of his country standing reposingly, but in such a way that you can read in the posture and outline of each limb the evidence of a life of energetic activity, the story of all his battles, the crossing of rivers, the storming of forts, the shock of the charge. The face is tranquil now, no trace of severe or troubled thought working beneath it; the mind, you see, is standing, as well as the body; and yet, study the face and you shall read in its lines and surfaces a history of all his campaignings and plannings and anxieties, his bitter disappointments and infinite perplexities and weary night-watchings; the magistrate's earnest thought, the commander's sleepless vigilance, the mental intensities of a

war so long and great. That face could not stand there, beaming out from its niche upon the passing generations, so calm and strong, so majestic and benignant, except as the result of such forceful and continuous action of the mind beneath it. He could not stand so unless he had first done all.

The statue of Franklin, standing there in the open square, — in face and figure and attitude it is the image of an easy, comfortable old man, standing there just as it comes most natural to him, and as though he never would get tired. But the artist lets you know, — though he is careful that you shall not know how you know it, — that the man has moved, and moved to a purpose, through a long life-time. He has arrived at that posture by a noble and fruitful activity of more than three-score years. It is an easy thoughtfulness that sits now on that bare brow; but it is the tranquil wisdom wrought out of patient investigation, profound reflection, days and nights of mental toil and useful work, and never given over till it was done, and he had a right to put off the harness. He stands so still and easy, only because he has won the right and achieved the power to stand so. If the man had not worked and moved laboriously, faithfully, through his working day, he could not look so tranquil and so stable. If truly represented, he would look as if the dignity were constrained and assumed, as if he would get tired, as if you could shove him from his majesty. He could not stand so

well unless he had done well. The artist of real genius understands the moral and spiritual laws better, perhaps, than he is himself aware of.

Thus it is in the daily exhibition of human character. Its highest, its crowning aspect, is that of a calm, firm standing still; but such a standing as has that about it which testifies to previous energetic movement and vigorous action long continued. In the realm of character, being is higher than doing, but it requires the doing to produce and establish it. But we must consider some of a man's standing postures more in detail.

It is a part of manliness to stand firmly and full-fronted by one's convictions on any and all subjects, — to have settled opinions and declare them and adhere to them; no timid hiding; no vacillating shifts from one foot to the other; no leaning and bending, now this way and now that, to catch the breeze of popular favor or shun the popular dissent; not here to-day and to-morrow there, but in the same spot to-day and to-morrow and the next day. Not seeking to please everybody by agreeing with everybody in opinion, but to stand somewhere, and make it no secret where, — not in an aggressive attitude, but a firm one. This sort of standing has great manliness in it. The strength of it is visible; it is felt; there is weightiness in it, and a powerful composure and much respect waits upon it. But such a posture cannot be assumed at will. A man cannot say, "Here is an opinion or a side that is plausible

or desirable or effective, — go to, now, let us adopt and stand by it bravely." That will not be standing as the Apostle means the word; it will only be sticking here or there; not standing erect, plumb, self-poised, but drifted somewhere and lodged. And all men unconsciously see and estimate the difference of position. In order to stand in manly strength and uprightness in any intellectual position, and be seen to stand so, and to stand comfortably so, you must have earned the right and the power to stand so by previous and energetic action of the mind upon the subject. You must have attained your convictions by laborious thought and patient investigation; you must have arrived at them as the very truth; you must, in adopting them, have maintained your intellectual veracity and disinterestedness for truth and right; honor and conscience must have been taken into counsel; you must know what you think and why you think it; and see how you could not think otherwise without believing a lie; you must have done all that in you lies, as a faithful worker, to ascertain the true and the right. Then you can stand. Convictions so reached enable you to stand by them and in them, very firm, very composed, very weighty. And you will so stand that it will be obvious in your whole port that you have a right to stand, and will stand, let the winds blow as fiercely or diversely as they may, — upheld by the sure, the mighty, the eternal gravitation of the mental universe. But if you have come to your

opinions lightly and without labor, by mere caprice or prejudice, or the popular current or for a selfish end, you may be ever so tenacious of them, and inflexible, yet it will not be *standing*, man-fashion, — a mere dogged bracing up, — no motion, to be sure, yet no repose. It will be seen that it is mere conceit, or pride, or laziness of mind; a blind and stupid adherence, but not a standing. It is obvious you are no strong column gravitating to its firm pedestal of rock, but a light autumn leaf blown into its hole in the ground, and abiding there, to be sure, till all is perished, but only sodden in, stuck in the mire of its own decay. First, do all, and then, and only then, can you stand weightily as a man.

It is the same with regard to the more practical matter of fixedness of purpose. There is no manliness of character without fixed aims persistently pursued. There must be definite objects, there must be strong resolution, a will that refuses to be bent by any chance influence from abroad or freak from within. You must have an unalterable purpose; thereby you stand and are a man, and not otherwise. Yet not certainly, even then. Whence came your aims and purposes? Did you take them up accidentally? merely float that way with the wind or tide? form them without thoughtfulness? with no regard to the question of their fitness or unfitness, worth or worthlessness, rightfulness or wrongfulness, meanness or honorableness? Is it so? Then, however firmly you may seem to stand in them, it will not

be standing as the Apostle uses the word. It will be — and every eye will see it to be — mere obstinacy, willfulness, impracticableness, an affected posture, the result of conceit, of passion, of contradictoriness of spirit or indolence of character, — a posture that gives you no ease and inspires no respect, makes you disagreeable rather, and contemptible, as seeming to stand when you are only braced up. In order to a manly standing in regard to your aims and purposes, you must first have done all to make sure that they are rational and wise, — you must have given the best exertion of your thought to the shaping of them. You must revere them as the well-ascertained laws and intents of God; you must have squared them with the rule of right; founded them on everlasting principles; wrought them out with laborious reason, put into them your soul's whole sense of justice, and all the heart's inspiration of loving-kindness, — made them noble and Christian and pure. Then you can stand indeed; and a fixedness and persistency of resolve shall give you the aspect and reality of manly strength. You stand like a mountain on its base. Such a standing as glorious Paul would recognize, such as gives the soul a lofty repose and is a spectacle for man and angels to admire. You exhibit the highest attainment of earthly or heavenly art, namely, the greatest strength, long disciplined and practiced and thoroughly possessed, but in repose, and in repose the loftiest style of majesty and beauty.

There is a kind of standing that implies chiefly the power of endurance, and consists of fortitude and patience. To bear up bravely against the tide of adversity; to meet disappointments with a cheerful equanimity; to suffer wrong and not be brought under the sway of the angry and revengeful passions; to suffer obloquy and not be disheartened or turned from the right; to suffer pain and privation without a loss of tranquillity and trust; to be bereaved and afflicted, but not despairing; to be defeated, but not cast down nor broken in spirit, — that is a sublime posture. There is a beautiful and heroic manliness in that kind of standing.

In some instances an apathetic temperament or a stoical disposition — cold, unimpressible and half alive — enables a person to stand so, or rather drops him down so, and he stays, imperturbable, just where he drops, a lump of insensibility, resembling, not so much the statue that seems rooted to its base and held there by a just equipoise and a strong action of the limbs, but more like a bowlder, disengaged from the iceberg and tumbling on whither it may chance, till it gets embedded somewhere and inertly sticks there. But in general none can stand erect and strong under hard endurance, except through the invigoration of a preceding activity. They only can rest who have wrought. Manly stability only follows a manly energy. It is a grand and lovely sight for a man to stand contentedly in his lot when that lot is a hard, unfavored one, but he cannot stand

so in it, unless he can say in his heart, I did my best to shun it or make it better. Calamity may be borne with tranquil patience, but only if the sufferer can say, I did my best to avert it; not through my neglect or inertness has it come, but by God's providence overruling my endeavors. A good conscience is the truest support and brings the manliest fortitude. To have done all is the best preparation for bearing all. The thing that most incapacitates us for bearing evil bravely and cheerfully is the ever-haunting reflection that we brought it upon ourselves or negligently let it come upon us. Do all your duty, and if trouble comes in consequence of it, or in spite of it, it finds you strengthened to meet it like a man. Faithful doing braces the soul for patient bearing. Act strongly when it is the time for action, and you can stand strong when there is nothing to do but to stand. The Apostle in this very connection bids us to take unto ourselves the whole armor of God, that we may withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. The armor of God. He names it piece by piece, — shield, and shoes, and breastplate, and helmet, and sword, — covering and equipping the whole man. A most military description of moral outfit and spiritual preparation, all designed to enable and prepare us to stand. Every word of his charge breathes of energetic action. The armor is to be worn, — it is symbolic, every item of it, of the march and the battle. No mere idle dalliance or showy parade, but symbols of strength

and perseverance in the fight. The armor is for doing, doing all, doing your best, and then you may stand, and can. No sentimentalism of a luxurious piety; no easy dreaming of faith; no lazy and self-indulgent spiritual-mindedness, will answer to make you stand Christian-wise, man-wise, — but only the vigorous exercise of all your faculties, a prompt seizing of all your opportunities, the doing of all your duties, the struggle and the work of a faithful, useful life. These alone knit up the moral sinews of the mind and produce a man, such as can stand.

For the purpose of distinguishing the two parts of manliness, I have spoken of the doing as if it all preceded the standing in the order of time; as if one were wholly a previous preparation, and the other wholly a final result, — but in fact, in actual life, the two parts are intermixed, — there is occasion for both together or alternately. The doing is never over, the standing is never final. All we can say is, that we sometimes contemplate a Christian man under one aspect and sometimes under the other, as occasion may chance; and he himself feels at one moment the glow of action, and at another stability and repose, — the standing still. Still, the spiritual order is such as I have designated, — work before rest, duty before patience, battle before peace, fidelity before contentment, doing well before standing well.

This combination and interchange of the two great human functions I have called manliness, but not in such a sense as to exclude women

from sharing it. It is just as much true womanliness. It is the soul of man or woman discharging its two great offices, marching and halting, doing and enduring; energetic in action, but placid in contentment; obeying God's commandment vigorously and bearing his will meekly and gently; wearing the armor of God for the conflict of life, and yet nestling softly in his bosom; indomitable will coupled with tenderness of heart; force, giving place in its time to stillness, and both alike perfect through the strength that is in them. Force and weight, force and equipoise, firmness of position with vigor of advance. Such is the Christian manliness which St. Paul expressed in these words of the text and embodied in his noble life. We want it, and it is so comprehensive in its attributes that it seems as if we wanted nothing else. Cultivate it, and in both its parts. Seek it in its completeness. Where you witness it in life behold the grandeur of it, and give it your reverence, and the beauty of it, and give it your love. All truth and all right, all God's spirit and man's energy, all the intellect and all the heart, go to the composition of it. It is individual nobleness, the strength of states, and the hope of the world. It acts and it stands conspicuous all through the course of Paul's apostleship. It shines out in the Christ in that wilderness conflict, on the hills of Galilee, in the temple at Jerusalem, in the confronting of the judgment-hall, in the garden, on the cross. Manliness all, and that the noblest and divinest;

now the one part of it and now the other; now a doing, and again a standing; separated to thought, but inseparable in character, both blending in the even tenor of a Christian's life, and culminating in the triumph and peacefulness of a Christian's death.

1858.

VIII.

GO QUICKLY.

And go quickly, and tell his disciples that He is risen from the dead. — *Matt.* xxviii. 7.

THIS was said to the Marys, when they had come at the dawn to the grave of Jesus, and had found it open and empty, and the angel from heaven sitting upon the stone. The angel explained to them what had taken place, spoke gently to them, soothed their fears, showed them the vacant grave, made them familiar with the astounding event, and then sent them away, bidding them go quickly, and tell the great news to his disciples, and how He was going before them into Galilee, and they would meet Him there, and be with Him again. "Go quickly," said the angel. And why so quickly? How came that word upon the lips of the calm angel? What need of haste? The news would keep, and would be as good an hour, a day, a week hence, as at that moment. The event of the resurrection was for all time; it concerned all the future generations, and was to stand as the symbol of man's life and immortality as long as birth and death and burial should continue. It was not to be the wonder

of a day, but the good news that should be forever new and forever good; a joy and a hope that should grow brighter and fuller with the passage of time, and never cease out of the human heart. Why should those women run so fast to tell it, and an angel bid them do it, to anticipate the natural pace of rumor by a few minutes or hours, and to hurry the telling of it to a dozen men, when the millions who were concerned just as much were waiting the slow progress of the generations and the march of the centuries to learn it? Why that word of haste?

Let us put the simplest construction upon it; let us derive the simplest lesson from it. If we seek only great and unwonted meanings in these gospel narratives and sayings, with an ear and a thought only for sublime and hidden mysteries, we overlook and lose the truer, better lessons that offer themselves only to the child-like heart. We are charged to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. The greatest facts and most vital principles are such as a little child can take in! They are hidden from the too wise and prudent, — from the ambitious intellect that is too far-seeking and deep-searching, and are revealed unto babes, — that is, to what is simplest in the heart of man.

"Go quickly, and tell them," said the angel. If we might ask him for the reason of the haste, and he might answer us, I can suppose he would only say, — what any thoughtful heart, with quick and kindly sympathies, whether from heaven or

among men, would say, — Do it quickly, for those men, those stricken disciples, are suffering great anguish of spirit. They have seen their dear master and friend die a cruel death; seen his form laid in the dark grave; they are mourners. They miss his dear presence unspeakably. They feel like sheep without a shepherd, scattered and uncared for; their hopes are gone; they are sinking in despair; their memories, their anticipations all sad, even to great anguish of spirit. And here is blessed news for them. It will remove all their sorrow, transform them, put a new face on life and death and all things for them, give them back their friend, and their joy in Him, and their hope in Him. He is not dead, He is risen. True, they will learn all about it at any rate, after a while, nevertheless go to them instantly; lose not a moment; do not let them suffer an instant longer than you can help, nor shed one tear that can be spared. Let consolation reach them, and change their grief to gladness as quickly as possible. Do not loiter when hearts are bleeding, and there is healing ready for them. "Go quickly."

Was it a word unfitting the grandeur of an angel to speak? Or are there reasons for it unworthy to be put into the lips or attributed to the thought of a seraphic being? Our knowledge of angels is very limited and imperfect. We know little of their thought and feeling; but surely we can say safely, that if they are higher and holier beings than the dwellers of earth, their superi-

ority must consist partly, at least, in possessing in a greater degree and intensity unselfish activity; those sensibilities which are the holiest, the divinest, the most beautiful that we are susceptible of, or can conceive. I should not know how to ascribe any higher attribute to an angelic heart than that which shows brightest in Him who was made but a little lower than the angels, — namely, a quick and tender compassion for all human suffering and sorrow, a pity eager to minister to the troubled heart, and a quick responsive rejoicing in sympathy with all pure joy throughout the world. The devout imagination of saint and poet, in assigning guardian angels to this world's pilgrims, to attend their steps, and hover over their waking and their sleeping, and watch over their welfare, has always loved to attribute to them the tenderest pity, the fondest solicitude for the objects of their charge, — pensive when they err or suffer, and radiant with celestial joy when they do well, and are glad. And the piety of the world's heart always feels that this is the heavenliest garb in which our thought can clothe those celestial spirits, and the divinest respect that it can assign to them. When we think of them we will not think otherwise.

We read that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; and if for that, will there not be joy, too, for every sorrow that finds comfort, for every distress alleviated, for every despairing doubt brightened into cheerfulness, for every smile that follows tears? "Go quickly,"

said that shining one. The tender heart brooks no unnecessary delay; it will have its benefactions borne upon swift wings. If the angels feel love and pity for the children of men, — and how can they be angels otherwise, — they must feel this holy impatience.

Let us take home the lesson. It is a very small and simple one; it is not what theologians would call a doctrine; it could not well be put into a creed as creeds commonly are written; the lesson is a trivial one to the ear, almost as petty and insignificant as that saying of Jesus himself, about the cup of water, — a small lesson to come to church for, if that be all we are to get to-day. And yet it is not very small by the heart's measurement, whether that heart be a man's or an angel's. Nothing can be very small that has to do with that first and all-embracing commandment of Jesus, that new commandment of his, — not small to meanness, not petty enough for contempt, not wholly superfluous or insignificant, for the furtherance of a Christian life. At any rate, it is the lesson of our text, and we must take it.

"Go quickly." The sentiment of this charge, as we have supposed it to lie in the angel's heart, unfolds itself for us into large applications. Do your good deeds, — all that you have the heart to do at all, all that you are Christian enough to devise and desire, — do them promptly and at once. The kind thing that you design for any fellow-creature, do not delay it: that is the spirit of the angel's words to the Marys, and to all of

us. Is there any suffering anywhere that you would and can relieve? — make haste. Hours and moments are long to a sufferer; let your sympathies make them long to you. Shorten them by your swift steps and prompt deeds; the good done quickly is twice done; a seasonable service is doubled in value. Is there a gracious word for you to speak to somebody, a word that will give comfort, a word of good cheer, a word of forgiveness, of reconciliation, of peace, a word of good news from afar, or of gladness at home? As soon as it is in your thoughts, or in your heart, fly to utter it, that there may be no postponement of the blessing and the joy. Will your presence carry light, strength, courage, to anybody within your reach! It is an angel's visit that you are privileged to make; make it quickly; wait not for milder airs and drier grounds or any more convenient season. Are there any to whom you owe reparation? Do not let the sense of wrong rankle in their breasts a moment longer than you can help; set that right instantly; you want wings for such an errand as that. Do you stand in any relationship which needs to be made happier, and can be? To-morrow is not soon enough for it. Lives there one whom, by any counsel or influence you can save, or turn from any single act of folly or sin? Delay not to send that joy up to heaven. Is there any errand of charity or mercy appealing to you? Seize the first moment; take the shortest road; want and distress cannot wait for laggard steps, — at least the heart in you,

though colder and more selfish than an angel's, should not let you feel that they can wait. Be it the law of your heart that the brother who can be gladdened to-day must not lie weeping or pining to-night. Whom can you save from a wakeful and tossing anxiety this night? Let not to-morrow's sun bear witness against you for sluggard steps and a careless heart.

The angel's charge to the Marys seems to ask for itself a still wider application. It addresses itself not only to the kindly and compassionate feelings, but to the whole conscience and reason of man. Whatever thou hast to do, which it is wise to do, or which it is a duty to do, do it quickly; do it now, — that is the tone of the text. Seize the occasion; let the hand keep time to the intent; couple thought and act close together; let the right deed be struck out and shaped amid the heat and glow of the soul's first prompting. A dilatory habit defeats more good purposes, fritters away more moral strength and brings more moral discomfort and self-reproach, I might almost say, than all other causes put together. The movement of human life is so adjusted in relation to the movement of time, nature, and Providence, that the harmony of things is disarranged, so far as we are concerned, by all our stoppages and delays. We have to move quickly if we would keep step to the music of the universe we are placed in. There is just one time for doing whatever we have to do, and if that hour strikes unheeded, the thing not done,

there is a disturbance in the order of things in which we move that is not easily corrected, and a loss difficult to retrieve. Life is robbed of no small measure of its comfort and tranquillity, by the slow, hard dragging after us of labors and duties deferred, and the farther they drag behind the heavier they seem, the greater the friction of them, and the greater the disadvantage at which we pull upon them. And then arrears accumulate so fast to the dilatory. The slow and slothful have to go into moral bankruptcy every little while, and take a discharge from their liabilities, feeling that the present burden of duties is as much as they can bear, and that the long array of by-gones, stretching and dragging far behind, must be cast off and ignored. This affords temporary relief; yet not complete relief, for there they are, — the old debts of duty forever lying along the way that has been traveled over, refusing to be quite buried in forgetfulness or wiped out in insolvency, perpetual witnesses of the soul's default, and perhaps one day to be rolled together, a crushing mountain mass, in judgment upon its unfaithfulness. The conscience is comparatively an easy and pleasant master when it is enjoining the present duty and superintending the present labor; but when it links itself with the memory, and points us backwards upon its commands that we have slighted, and the labors we have deferred, — then it changes its countenance; then it frowns; then it plagues and whips us; it will not let us enjoy our ill-

gotten respite from its service. We know how it is; the school-boy can tell us how it is, for he knows that if he defers his task till he has had his sport, the task is harder when it comes, and the sport itself was less free-hearted and satisfying, and the day has not gone well with him, nor closed pleasantly. If he did the duties first, he could be cheerful and hopeful about it, and then the play would be pleasure indeed. And so it is all through the school-day of after life. Work deferred to the last moment, and done under the whip of imposing necessity, is always reluctant and severe; it has to be, as it were, twice done; and if it be deferred till it is too late to do it at all, the remembered neglect of it is tenfold harder than twice the doing of it would have been. Oh! the sharp, quick twinges of memory, or the dull, slow mortifications we feel, as there comes up to mind, every now and then, the act of duty or self-improvement, of courtesy or kindness that was overlooked or postponed in the time of it, and now cannot be done at all, or, if done, prevents the doing of something else, or loses half its value and all its grace and its graciousness! In all the affairs of life, frequent or habitual postponement is a life-long discomfort, and a continuous process of demoralization. It lays up an exhaustless store of gnawing remembrances; it unknits the moral sinews of the mind; it ravels out every rational web of life; it leaves a flabby, forceless character.

There is a certain rate of speed — a fixed rate

— in the things and events around us, and we must keep pace with them or we are run over and dragged and bruised, and the strength of our life is spent in a vain endeavor to catch up with them. We chase after them, weary and out of breath, always driven, always in a hurry, and yet always behindhand; it is a wretched kind of life!

Our life, in the highest view of it, consists of a series of opportunities for right doing and well doing. They pass on quickly, drop off, link by link, as of a chain, never to return; precious opportunities, our whole spiritual capital, — we must seize them as they arise, then or never, — they are instantly gone: we have no time to follow them, and others have arisen in their places, inviting, commanding our attention and our strength. Life is short, considering how much is to be done in it, how much there is to put into it, how much there is to be won from it; its work requires dispatch, — the prompt thought, the decisive will, the instant deed. The winged hours, the approaching end, rebuke our dawdling, and punish our sloth. Oh, for our conscience's sake, and for our peace, we must keep up with time, — keep up with our days, our hours, the very moments! The loitering and postponing habit, taken in all its fruits, is utter unfaithfulness and waste of life, its obligations, its privileges, its enjoyments.

If we also, like those saintly women, should meet an angel by the grave's side, or in any place, in any season, when the soul is most wakeful and the heart most tender, there is something that

he would bid each one of us to do; it might be some great repentance, some new style and course of life, — the soul within us can tell us what it would be, for it is through the soul that our angel speaks to us, — nay, each morning, as we go forth to the trial and the work of the day, it is with us as though an angel met us at our doors and assigned to us our errands, each man his own, each woman, each child. It bids us go render some service, or do some act of mercy or kindness; to right some wrong; to perform some duty; to practice some needed self-denial; to resist some temptation that we are about to meet; to maintain, by word or act, some principle that is in peril with us; to do the things, whatever they may be, that shall make it for us a faithful and a well-spent day, — useful to man, pleasing to God, nourishing to the heart, satisfying to the conscience, and the pledge of better days to come, if they shall come, and sufficient unto itself if it be the last. And when our angels — visible to the inner eye, audible to the spirit's ear, heavenly voices within us — thus speak to us, and give us our errands, and point us to the way, they always bid us hasten, — do we not hear them? It is no angel if that charge be omitted. The heavenly messengers always counsel speed. It will be their office, by and by, in the language of the Apocalypse, to stand upon the sea and upon the earth, to declare to each one of us, in our turn, by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there shall be time no longer. They know the

inestimable worth of time. They know the treachery of a lingering purpose and a halting will; and therefore, for every errand of love or duty that they assign to us, they bid us go quickly. That is always their last word to us, as to the Marys, in that garden of the sepulchre, — "Go quickly."

1859.

IX.

TRUE RELIGION.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.— *James* i. 27.

THIS is the only instance in the Bible in which the word religion is used so as to convey any definition of it. This is a definition, and a very sound and satisfactory one. It affirms that pure religion is identical with personal goodness. Of course the Apostle did not mean to enumerate all the actions or traits which go to constitute such goodness, but only to give two or three instances of them. He knew as well as anybody that ministering to the helpless and afflicted, and keeping free from the vices of the world, was not the whole of a good life, not a complete enumeration of the things which constitute it, but samples of them, — these things and others like them are the things in which it consists. He means to say that a good life, humane, useful, just, blameless, pure, is the religious life, fulfilling the requirements of the gospel and acceptable to God. Religion and practical goodness are one and the same thing.

This is the Apostle's statement, and it sounds

commonplace enough, we may say; as if everybody did not know that, — as if any man of sense could doubt it, or give any other definition at variance with this. But indeed it is a definition that has been very slow in getting itself accepted among men. It is not fully nor even generally accepted, even yet, in the Christian world, though it has at last fairly got a footing, and is gaining ground rapidly. It is only in the present age that this definition can be said to be received at all, or to any extent. Every other kind of definition has had historical precedence of this. The various Christian sects have set up other tests and conditions of the religious character and good standing in preference, and almost to the neglect of this. The more ritual sects or churches have called it religion to observe devoutly and strictly certain prescribed rites and forms; and the more doctrinal sects have made religion consist in modes of belief, in holding certain opinions, in interpreting the difficult passages of Scripture aright. All these sects, to be sure, or nearly all of them, to do them justice, have faithfully urged the importance of moral goodness. They have inculcated the practical virtues. Only they have maintained that these are not religion, not the thing itself, but incidental to it, — resulting from it, but not the essence of it. It is something else that is the prime condition of salvation, and makes man acceptable to God; certain observances, or, among the Protestants, more generally certain views or beliefs, leading them to

consider a religious man as something different from a merely good man, and above a merely good man, — religion a different thing from personal goodness, and a greater thing. The definition of our text has not had general acceptance among Christians.

Towards the early part of the present century there arose here, in New England, a body of men who dissented and revolted from the style of religious thought that had generally prevailed throughout Protestant Christendom. The elements which led to this movement had long been gathering and working, and then they came to a head, and obtained a distinct expression of themselves. These new movers took at first the rather vague title of Liberal Christians. Afterwards the more narrow and distinctive name of Unitarian somehow got applied to them. And though they had very slight organization, and no written creed, the world insisted on considering them a sect — one sect among the many. They were not, and are not, really a sect, as other sects are sects, because they had no standard of qualifications, no test of admission, drew no lines, asked no questions of those who proposed to join them, excluded nobody for his belief or want of belief, recognized no tribunal among themselves that *could* exclude anybody; the door is wide open for anybody to come in or go out, and nothing said or done about it. But still, other sects could not conceive that a body of people should call themselves Christians without being a sect, and

devoted to a sect, — so they must call these a sect, and let it go so. Very likely they deserve the title from their having, or some of them, often descended to the narrowness and partisanship that generally characterize sects.

Now these new people, the Unitarians, had their distinctive theology, certainly, though with many differences among themselves. They had their methods of interpreting Scripture, their views of Christian dispensation and the divine purposes, leading them to reject many of the doctrines that were generally held. And they were not slack in carrying on a controversy with those from whom they differed in these matters. But their great and obvious mission was to proclaim and reëstablish the principle involved in our present text, namely, that a man's religion does not depend upon his mode of belief, but upon the state of his heart, and the conduct of his life; and to insist upon it that the truly good man was the truly religious man, whatever his doctrinal position might be. They controverted with zeal certain doctrines, — the doctrine of the Trinity, atonement, total depravity, and some others, — opposed them in the form in which they were generally held. But their great point has constantly been, that a man's religion, or his salvation, does not depend upon the views he holds on these subjects; that right believing is not essential to procuring the divine favor, but right being and living. Their chief desire has not been so much to break down any existing

theology as to do away the idea that any one particular theological belief is necessary to make a man religious in the Christian sense of the word. Their protest was not so much against particular doctrines as against that spirit which said, or seemed to say, that certain doctrines constituted the narrow gate through which alone there could be an entrance to the kingdom of heaven. They have insisted that holy living is religion, — good deeds and a Christ-like heart. Righteousness has been their principal doctrine, the one to which they have assigned the place of preëminence; and in their literature and their preaching, it cannot be denied, they have very faithfully kept that doctrine in its place of precedence. The first to take this ground, in modern times at least, they have maintained it well and effectively.

But there are some who are ready to say that this attempt to set up character and life in place of doctrine or opinion, as the essence of religion, has been, or is becoming, a failure; because they say that Unitarianism, with which this attempt has been identified, is declining, or, at least, not gaining ground, — tending to its decline. This is a question of fact. I will not discuss it now, except to remark that this religious system has been, and is supported by so much of the intelligence and character and moral influence of the people of New England as to render it premature, as yet, for its opponents to prepare to dance over its grave, or its friends to pronounce its eulogy, and put on mourning for its death.

But suppose it has declined, or is about to decline; is it because it has failed in its objects, and therefore must die, or because it has succeeded in them, and therefore it is not necessary that it should live on? I am happy to think that the latter reason is the real one, upon the supposition, which is quite gratuitous, of its speedy decay. Even though it should die and be buried to-morrow, and the last vestige of its denominational existence be swept away forever, it will still have been one of the most influential and permanently successful religious movements of modern times. It has carried its point to an unexampled extent. It has very palpably liberalized the whole theology of New England. It has ceased to be asserted with anything like the old positiveness and frequency that men are to be saved or lost upon their opinions, or are dear or odious to God according to what they believe. It is not the custom, as it used to be, to consign good men to perdition, on the ground that they believe or do not believe this or that tenet of theology. Whatever preacher now denounces or sorrows over good men as shut out from God's favor, on account of their way of interpreting Scripture, is behind his age, and preaches to unwilling ears and unsympathizing or protesting souls, in almost any congregation in New England. Whoever, now, insists that a particular mode of belief is necessary to religion, and that whole classes of Christians are destitute of religion, and cut off from salvation because they dis-

sent, that man is rather an exceptional character amongst us; and you will generally find, either that he is a new-comer, and, of course, likely to be carried away with inordinate zeal, or else that he is a stranger, from a less liberal part of the country, and has not yet breathed our air long enough, or else that he is a born bigot, narrow and bitter in the grain, and so incurable. The old theory, indeed, that a correct speculative belief is religion, and the prime condition of the divine favor, is not expressly rejected or annulled; but it is getting practically obsolete; it is no longer in the heart of the people, and can be acceptably pressed in hardly any sect or church amongst us. Simple goodness in heart and life is getting to be appreciated as the essence of religion, and that in spite of all creeds and traditions to the contrary.

Now, if these things be so, Unitarianism has accomplished the main object for which it took up arms, and it is comparatively little matter what becomes of it now, as an organism. The battle of freedom has been fought, and virtually won, and it is comparatively of little consequence how soon its champions disarm and disband themselves. That point being gained, they have little occasion to prolong the contest. They can sit down peaceful and respected under their own vine and fig-tree, among the religious associations to which they have become wonted, or be content, if it is best, to go in and sit down with their neighbors, on equal terms, under their vine

and fig-tree, without being denounced or sorrowed over. Once get it universally admitted, — and it is coming to that, — admitted that real religion is a thing of heart and life and conduct, and not doctrinal belief, and we have got nearly all that we need care for. The revolution desired is achieved. The liberal system prevails, and who cares under what name? If all sects become liberal, and annul or ignore the system of doctrinal tests, then Unitarianism will have lost its peculiar characteristic, and there will be nothing important depending upon its progress or its decline; its triumph is the same in either case.

But this diffusion of liberality is not the only success that has been gained. Not only have the pretensions of the old doctrinal tests been abated, but the doctrines themselves, against which Unitarianism arrayed itself, have, during the controversy, and as the result of it, been greatly modified. They assume less rigorous forms; they have had to adapt themselves to the intelligence of the times; are less angular, unreasonable, and repulsive; are so stated and explained as not to be very incredible or shocking to anybody. And since they can no longer be urged very successfully as the one only way of salvation, they come to be regarded as less vitally important, and are not pressed with so much constancy and emphasis. I suppose there is a great deal less doctrinal preaching, and a great deal more practical preaching in all sects

than formerly. And I suspect that the preacher who most persistently and exclusively preaches the distinctive doctrines of his church, will be found, other things being equal, to have the sleepiest, or the most indifferent, or the most discontented congregation. There is constant and increasing testimony in all churches that the people do not feel most edified by speculative and controversial theology, but by whatever tends to promote peace and good-will, pious feeling and practical goodness; and so far as that feeling prevails, Unitarianism ought to be perfectly satisfied.

One of the most important changes produced by the controversies of this century, in which Unitarianism has taken a conspicuous part, is the modification that has been effected in the doctrine of future punishment. It is greatly softened on all hands. God is not now, anywhere amongst us, represented in the character of a cruel, vindictive, arbitrary despot, so much as formerly. Read the sermons of the great Edwards upon this subject. You hardly find anything like them now in the lowest resorts of religious fanaticism. The damnation of infants, — the idea is so shocking now to everybody that it is almost denied that such an idea was ever held. Milder conceptions of God, as a Father, have got diffused everywhere. And thus the old theology is deprived, in a good degree, of that potent instrument of terror by which it used to wring from unwilling lips and trembling hearts

the profession of a doctrinal belief which the calm reason would have hesitated to accept, but which the flashing fires of hell left little time to examine, and made it fatal to doubt about.

From these several causes, working together, the old points of doctrinal controversy have lost a great part of their interest in people's minds. Who cares much now about the old controversies respecting the doctrines of Trinity and atonement and depravity and election and predestination that once took such hold of the popular mind? These have become nearly obsolete issues; very little interest is felt in the dispute. There is still a diversity of belief upon these subjects; but it is found out that the differences are to a great extent verbal, and become often quite reconcilable by new and more felicitous statements. If it were not for the old names of doctrines remaining, as the signals of conflict, the doctrines themselves, seemingly so opposite, would be found continually moving into one another and overlapping one another.

But the chief reason why no zeal of controversy can be re-awakened on these subjects is, that doctrines of this class are no longer generally regarded as the vital ones, — that the saving faith of the gospel does not consist in opinions on these subjects, but in that state of the heart out of which practical goodness flows. That the true church of Christ consists not of those who agree together upon any speculative creed, but comprises all good men, of whatever creed or no

creed. The day has gone by for setting up doctrines of that class as standards by which to determine any man's Christian state, or as proofs or disproofs of any soul's salvation.

It is announced now and then that this or that man has arrived at a certain doctrine respecting the atonement, or respecting the Trinity, — accepting or rejecting it. The matter is interesting to the man himself, inasmuch as it shows that he has attained to the solution of some difficulty that had arisen in his own mind, attained to a statement satisfactory to himself of a speculative subject on which his mind happens to have been exercised and previously unsettled. But the fact interests the Christian public very slightly, because whatever his doctrine may be upon such points, he cannot, in these days, set it up as the exclusive means of salvation, nor take ground that no one can be truly religious who does not concur in his statement.

Just so far as the principle of our text gets established, namely, that pure religion, or the essence of religion, is goodness, that and nothing else, so far all differences of speculative dogma become of secondary moment, and may be discussed calmly with a single desire to get at the truth, without any hurry or jealousy, or bitterness or anathemas of any kind. If, as I believe, this principle is getting established among all sects, and true liberality is too far advanced to be lost again, then Unitarians have every reason to be satisfied with the results of their movement, and

that, just the same, whether their slight denominational organization shall grow stronger or weaker, shall continue or cease. If their principles only prevail they will not care whether it be under their own banner, — if indeed they ever had one, — or under any other or many others. The prevalence of the liberal principle, the principle of our text, the principle that true religion is not dogma, but personal goodness, — the prevalence of this principle among the people of all sects and creeds, will undoubtedly lead, in time, to some modifications of existing sectarian divisions. It is already visibly disintegrating several of the sects, and will lead to new combinations and a different outward *régime* of the churches. What those changes will be, and what new state of things will arise, no one can foresee; and he is a bold man who undertakes to plan or predict respecting them. We can only hope and prophesy that whenever the church of the future appears, it will be a church founded on the principle that goodness, not dogma, is religion.

There will still be, and perhaps always will be, theological diversities, different, and often opposite statements of dogma among Christians. The natural diversities of the human mind create, and probably will perpetuate, such differences; and we know that a person's theological views become very important and dear to him; his way of explaining the great mysteries, solving the mighty problems of divine and eternal things; and they become associated inseparably with all his best

and most sacred hopes and principles, identified with the innermost life of the soul, unspeakably precious and important to him. And let them be so, and continue so. What matter, what harm, if he has only learned to feel and confess that different doctrines, and perhaps opposite ones, are just as precious and important to his neighbor, and just as intimately associated in him with that goodness in heart and life which is the only real religion in either of them. It is no harm that there should be various sects, and that, too, founded upon theological differences, if it only comes to be acknowledged all round that there is but one religion, and that that is goodness. Sectarian divisions, then will not be incompatible with charity, brotherly love, and universal good-fellowship. One may be of Paul, and another of Apollos, and another of Cephas, and yet all three be one in Christ, who knew of no religion, felt none, and taught none, but simple goodness, the love of God and man.

Looking forward into the future with a good hope, and a patient one, of a good time coming for the churches and the world, it becomes us to be very faithful to this great principle, that religion is goodness. Thinking as we do, that we and those from whom we inherit, and with whom we are most associated, have been rather in advance of Christians generally in apprehending and announcing and contending for this great principle, it becomes us to rejoice gratefully in every sign of its prevalence, and to adhere to it

and promote it with all constancy and earnestness and charity; to keep fast hold of it, and not let it go; never measure our own or any man's religion by opinion or doctrine, but simply and only by being and doing.

Personally and practically it is a most strict and solemn principle to adopt and live by. God will judge us by what we are and do. There is no substitute for purity of heart and uprightness and usefulness of life. It is never well with any but the righteous. We cannot change the issue. Nothing will save us but to obey God and keep our own hearts and do good to one another. And when we stand at last before the judgment-seat, the question will not be whose opinions prove the correct, but who has been obedient, dutiful, keeping the law of love, keeping unspotted from the world; just, humble, penitent for sin, with a soul imbued with that one and only religion which is pure and undefiled before God and the Father.

January 8, 1860.

X.

UNITARIANISM.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. — *Galatians* v. 1.

LAST Sunday morning we took up the position which St. James maintains with such distinctness, that true religion is practical goodness. We considered how the liberal movement of the last half century, which hereabouts has been embodied in what is called the Unitarian denomination, has taken this ground as its leading principle, making its first object to set opinion free by subordinating dogma to personal holiness as the essence of religion. We considered the degree of success that had attended the movement, that success being manifested in abating the pretensions of doctrinal systems to the place of spiritual supremacy among Christians, and thus liberalizing the churches generally. We saw that this movement, even if it should now lose its organic existence, would still have proved itself one of the most powerful and permanently triumphant movements of the age, having introduced forces, and achieved results of a permanent and indestructible character; having achieved an immeasurable benefit in reproducing and reëstab-

lishing in the heart of all sects the ancient apostolic principle, that the essence of religion is not dogma, but goodness.

I will not recapitulate any farther, but it seems to me that some additional views in the same general direction may be presented to advantage, in immediate connection with those already given in that discourse.

My oldest parishioners, those who have listened to me through all these thirty years, will bear me witness that I have done and said almost nothing to identify them or myself with any denomination; that I have hardly ever spoken so much as the word "Unitarian," or expressed, or sought to enlist anything like sectarian sympathies. If my people had no other means of information, they would hardly have learned from anything I have ever said here, or done anywhere, that there was any particular body of Christians, or class of congregations, that we were in any way connected with. Many a friendly rebuke has reached me, objecting to this stand-aloof policy, as unsocial, as an excess of independence, and a throwing away of influence. I can hardly say that I regret the course that I have pursued, — indeed it has hardly been in my nature to pursue any other. I do not remember the time when I have not felt an extreme repugnance to being yoked in with anything like a sect. I have loved to regard what is called Unitarianism, not so much as a body of opinions, as the principle of liberty of opinion; not so much

a distinct organization of men and of churches, as an assertion of the independence of churches and of individual intellectual freedom, — in a word, that perfect liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free — no yoke of bondage, no entangling alliances, — calling none to account, and giving account to none. But not caring now to vindicate myself on this point, I can, at least, claim that I have not wearied my people with sectarian drill, nor fed them on the husks and bitter roots of sectarian strife ; and it is not likely that now, so late in life, I shall ever change much in this respect, or ever become an efficient promoter of a distinctive Unitarian doctrine or organization. There is just now, however, something in the circumstances of the time that inclines me to use that word, Unitarianism, more freely, with a view to considering it as a historical fact, — what it has done, and what it has yet to do, and what are its claims to the gratitude and respect of the Christian world. I am the more moved to this, because it seems to be thought by some, outside and inside, that Unitarianism is not just at this moment in its state of highest prosperity, but is rather undergoing a season of adversity. I hear it intimated that there are signs of its decline ; that the tide of fashion does not set in its direction in the metropolitan churches. Some say it is dying out at both ends, — at top and at bottom ; that from one end many are passing off out of reach, into all kinds of ultraism, and at the other, as many are slipping away into some

of the various folds of orthodoxy; in short, that it is a falling house which the prudent and timid have left, or are preparing to leave.

I suppose all this is a mere state of the tide for the hour, the accident of a day, a transient turn that belongs to the variable fortunes of all earthly things. But if it be a season of apparent adversity with Unitarianism, I, for one, and as one of those who have never blown its trumpet, nor glorified it, nor championed its cause in the days of its prosperity, will, at least, now, when many think that the edge of the cloud is over it, hasten to pay it a just tribute of honor and grateful love; to do justice to the purity of its purposes, the magnitude of its achievements, and to consider what the world has even yet to hope from the extension of its principles; and to assume my share of whatever odium may be attached to its name and fortunes. If those who have sunned themselves in its light, and have worn its honors in its palmier days, betray and forsake it in the moment when its visible prosperity is diminished, it is time for outside friends of liberty and truth and right to step forward and do justice to what is great and noble in its principles, and indestructible in its influence.

Let the form of inquiry in the present discourse be this: What is there in Unitarianism that claims for it the honor, and love, and steadfast allegiance, and unwavering confidence of its friends? There are several answers to this question, and we will go over as many as we have room for.

And its first claim to acceptance and respect is, that it grounds its authority upon and appeals for its support to a careful and honest interpretation of the Scriptures. It has brought to the study of the Bible the best faculties of the ablest minds, profound learning, and a spirit of free but patient and devout investigation. It has overlooked no part of the sacred volume, and yet it has used a just discrimination. It has given more weight to the teachings of the New Testament than to those of the Old, though reverently gathering all the truth it could from the latter. And again, it has assigned more weight to the words of Jesus Christ than to those of the Apostles. It has thought that where the Master speaks He is to be listened to with more deference than any of his disciples ; and accordingly, if on any points there has seemed to be any difference between the teachings of John or Paul and those of Christ, it was safest and best to take Christ's words as the text, and John's or Paul's as the commentary, Christ's as the standard of truth, and theirs to be reconciled with his, interpreted by Him, and conformed to Him. To know the mind of Christ, and to penetrate as deeply as possible into his inmost thought and feeling, has been the main theological endeavor of Unitarianism. Pursuing this method, a somewhat different system of doctrine has been arrived at from that obtained by those sects which have reversed this order of procedure, and taken Paul or John as the basis, and Christ himself only as the subsidiary teacher. A

body of scriptural truth has thus been evolved which has commended itself with remarkable force to the best intelligence of mankind, and the system of doctrine thus attained has been found, as might be expected from the rational and discriminating method of study which has been pursued, peculiarly in accordance with reason and common sense, and peculiarly acceptable to the most enlightened and rational minds. It has been a great joy to multitudes to find a system of belief that should be at once scriptural and reasonable, a correct statement of the word of God as contained in the Scriptures, and yet approving itself to the highest faculties of the mind, corresponding with the order of nature, confirmed by the divine laws and providences, harmonizing with the dictates of conscience, and the most sacred instincts of the heart, — a joy and a triumph that reason and faith, the two great lights from God, need no longer be at variance nor divorced. Now if we have thus accepted and believed these theological views as scriptural and rational and true, and they have become settled and honest convictions in the mind, how can we but cleave to them? How can we honestly escape from them? How shall we dare to shut our eyes against this great double light when they have once been opened to see it? Will it do in such a grave matter, in a solemn question of truth, to give in to any mere freak of fancy, or gust of feeling, or dictate of expediency? Will it do, for instance, to give up the

truth because the majority of men appear to be of another way of thinking? Is there any honesty in the belief that submits itself to be determined and changed by a majority vote? What sort of convictions are those that we can give up because they are unpopular? and what sort of convictions are those which we can adopt because we find they are popular and are held by the majority? They cannot be honest, and what we call believing is a mere make-believe.

Or supposing we have given up this Unitarian system of truth because we do not like its tendencies in the minds of some of its adherents, and are afraid of its leading into dangerous latitudinarianism, or do not like some of its social aspects, or some of its forms of worship, or its neglect of forms, or its excess in this, or its lack in that, or the idiosyncracies of some of its advocates, and so adopt an opposite system of belief in order to get away from these things which we fear or which are not to our taste. Have we not stultified ourselves in so doing? What! the mind's convictions of truth to be made dependent upon our fears and fancies and tastes! What sort of belief is that that changes upon such grounds? If we have adopted another system under such influences, it is doubtful whether we ever had any real belief, and it is about certain that we have none now. A belief assumed from such caprices can have no sense of the majesty of truth; it is no belief; it is mere partisanship and a choosing of sides; it is not honest; we have cheated ourselves; it is immoral

and unsafe; there is self-delusion in it; it is only a make-believe.

I do not say that we are responsible for our convictions, for they are not rightfully under the control of the will, or the wish; but we are responsible for all willful denials of what we have seen to be true, and there is moral guilt in rejecting one belief and accepting another on any other grounds than the mind's inmost convictions and on good reasons, and on the most deliberate and honest decision. All make-believes are demoralizing. Reason has its province, and feeling has its province, and there is as much falseness and sin in letting feeling, whether in the form of fear or love or sympathy, usurp the province of reason and lead us to belie our convictions, as in letting reason supersede the feelings in their province.

Unitarianism makes its stand first and chiefly upon the truth it holds, — the truth as Christ taught it, and as the enlightened human reason interprets and accepts it. Therein lies its strength, and that is its hold upon the minds that have received it, claiming their firm and honest allegiance through good report and evil report; in the face of every danger, in resistance of all allurements, in spite of any majorities.

The secondary ground on which this system claims our respect and adherence is the power there is in it. This would be nothing unless our reason were first satisfied of the truth of the system. Truth, before all things, is the law of rational

beings. But the reason being once convinced of its truth, it strengthens one's hold of it, and confines one's reverent attachment to it, to find that it is strong and effective, it is progressive, and is becoming prevalent. And these are the characteristics of the system we are considering. Unitarianism is very strong, and of most considerable power in the Christian world. But how so? It is not strong in the numbers assuming the name. It makes a feeble show in the census of Christian denominations. It has, and has always had, comparatively few churches and few ministers. It is not strong as an organization; it scarcely has any organization; it has no army with banners; and yet there are signs enough of its unmatched potency. How comes it, for one thing, — how comes it that this little handful of a denomination, a mere handful as to its visible organization, should be an object of so much alarm and resistance to all the great sects of Protestant Christendom? Sects that number their millions are afraid of nothing so much as of this little straggling band. Nothing disturbs them so much as its little insignificant presence. They treat it as if it were their principal opponent and danger. They warn their people against it with more solicitude than against anything else. Their chief controversies are directed against it; they dread it more than popery, more than infidelity, more than all other adverse influences. They recognize it as the one adversary against which they are to employ all their learning and logic and in-

vective and entreaty and watchful discipline. How is it that these great Goliaths of the ecclesiastical world tremble before this little, half-grown, loose-jointed stripling? that they are always going forth to meet him, as if they had none else to fear, and he alone were worthy of their steel? There must be a power in this system, or it could not provoke so much resistance and alarm. What is that power, and where is the hiding of it? Not in its numbers, which are despicably small in the eyes of those who go by count; not in its organization, for it has none, or next to none. It lies in the diffusive power of its principles, which altogether overpass and outrun its denominational lines, and spread everywhere, like an atmosphere. Unitarianism, considered as a lump, is very small, but considered as a leaven, it is vast and omnipresent. As an organism it is feeble; as an influence it is irresistible. It is not on account of the superiority of its men, not from any great things they can do; but because it has been their fortune to take up certain great principles which by their intrinsic divinity, and a power of their own, go forth almost unaided, conquering and to conquer, and win their silent victories without any visible assault.

Such principles as these, — the principle of free inquiry, the principle that every man has a right to discuss, to reëxamine all questions and all doctrines, without fear and without hindrance, and adopt such conclusions as his reason brings

him to, without being denounced as an enemy of religion or an outcast from God; the principle that all religious doctrines must be made accordant with human reason and consciousness and experience and pure affection, or else they cannot be from God, and cannot be the mind of Christ, nor worthy to be accepted; the principle that God is a being of perfect love and justice, and therefore can have pronounced against his children no despotic or irrational decree of damnation, nor have provided any arbitrary or technical conditions of salvation; the principle that the laws of God, as discovered in human nature and in external nature, must be in harmony with the the laws disclosed in any revelation or system of religion; and, above all, the principle which we discussed last Sunday, that the essence of religion is goodness, and that men are not lost or saved on their opinions, but on the intrinsic character of the heart and life, — these principles, which are amongst the leading ones held by Unitarians, and which the Unitarians have been most conspicuous in stating and defending and diffusing, will spread with rapidity and power, wherever the human mind becomes enlightened and free. No sectarian fence can be built high enough to keep them out; no church doors can be so barred by creed or discipline but that they will glide in, — the worshipers themselves unknowingly carrying them in, breathing them in their breath, and having the infection of them in their very garments. The very minister at

the altar, though he shun the words that embody them, cannot keep out the thoughts that include them. They insinuate themselves into all creeds and among all forms. These principles are native to the human soul; they are its birthright, and what wonder if they break through all barriers of prejudice, and spring up in all inclosures, and quietly assert themselves in the face of all hindrances. There are more Unitarians — a thousand to one — outside of the Unitarian organization than inside of it. That is, Unitarians essentially, in spirit and in principle, without the name, and without the technical doctrines. The Unitarians who take the name are very few compared with those who do not take it; and those embraced in churches called Unitarian are very few compared with those scattered in all other churches. For every one minister that renounces Unitarianism there are five that openly adopt it, and scores that become imbued with its spirit and preach its great principles with more or less distinctness, without taking the name. There are many ministers called Orthodox who preach essential Unitarianism with a more bold and earnest aggressiveness than I do, or many others like me, who bear the name, and they know how to do it, without losing their church connection, though not without provoking the bitter hostility of their more consistent and conservative brethren. There are whole files of most learned, accomplished, and influential ministers in the English Episcopal Church who, in their own words and in their own

way, preach and defend as liberal and thorough a Unitarianism as I, or probably any of you, hold or care to see prevail. They consider it, and love to call it, Trinitarianism, and to reconcile it with the Thirty-nine Articles; but what matters that? So much the better, if the doctrines be made reasonable, and the liberal principles which we hold and love under the name of Unitarianism be recognized and established.

Again, Unitarianism is powerful in its secular allies. Literature is almost universally on its side. All great writers of this age, excepting such of course as write religious books especially in the interest of special creeds and churches; all the free, general authors write, without intending it, but simply as they are led by their genius, in the interest of a liberal and rational religion. I do not call to mind any eminent living poet in England or America, the influence of whose poetry is not on the same side, coincident in spirit with the Unitarian theology, whatever other church the author himself may belong to. All science is Unitarian; every law of nature that is discovered, every fact of nature interpreted, illustrative of the Creator's plan and providence, harmonizes with the Unitarian view of the divine government. All schools and means of education, by whomsoever they are conducted, are Unitarian in their influence, and by giving freedom and expansion to the mind, prepare the way for, and unconsciously lead to, the principles that are coincident with this system. The free

intellect of the age is on its side, however seldom it may raise its banner; genius is on its side; human nature is on its side. Hence it is so powerful. And if, as we believe, the Bible is on its side too, what is there that can prevail against it? The name, which is but a poor one at best, — hardly better than a nickname, — may go out of existence, and few would mourn for it; but its essential principles will go on, rising higher and higher towards the ascendant, as long as God reigns and man thinks and loves and worships.

There is reason enough, then, why those portions of the evangelical sects, so called, who are unwilling to see any modification of their creeds, any relaxation of the rigors of their theology; reason enough why they should dread this subtle and all-pervading power of liberal and enlightened thought; and why they should look with alarm and sharp hostility upon Unitarianism as visibly representing this thought and this power, — not as *including* a thousandth part of it, but representing it and acting as the most avowed and acknowledged champion of it. How can they but fear and hate it when they see it diffusing its healthful, liberating influence, as we call it, or its deadly virus, as they call it, into the thick of their own stanchest ranks, running along the aisles of their most exclusive churches, and climbing into their best-guarded pulpits, undermining their systems and shaking their power. They are right and sagacious in regarding this

little denomination, which they despise for the weakness of its organization and its insignificance as to numbers, in regarding it, and manifestly recognizing it, as the one antagonist requiring their sharpest watchfulness and their best energies to assail and resist.

And the same reasons which lead its enemies to hate and fear it so much, ought to lead us to love and honor it with an equal ardor. It is a supreme privilege and joy, and such we should account it, to have been led, whether by God's favor and providence or by the diligent exercise of our own faculties, into a faith that puts us in unison with the facts of the universe and the laws of the soul, — a faith that finds itself in league with what is freest, strongest, noblest in the human mind, and finds the God of revelation identical with the God of nature, — a faith that is thus strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: that reconciles piety with reason, and couples the confidingness of a child-like heart with the strength and attainments of the manly mind. It is a glory and a delight to find one's self sailing over the seas of existence along with and not against the Divine currents, breathing the free airs of all God-given truth, and all man's most generous thought; to have torn away from the soul the dark and thick pall of theologic mystery and terror, and to be able to lift our heads and stand erect under God's open sky, and breathe and aspire freely. This soul-liberty is a boon to cherish as above all price. If, through

God's grace, we have attained to it, how can we ever relinquish it again? If we have gone forth into it, and found our feet set in its large places, and have enjoyed its untrammeled franchise, and walked with Christ and talked with God in the cool of its vast garden, and under the leadings of its cheery inspiration, how can we ever willingly go back within gloomy walls and barred doors and confined airs, and submit the mind to be shackled, and the heart to be oppressed with terror and gloom? How can we give up our birthright when we have once enjoyed it? Let the Apostle repeat his exhortation to us: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

January 15, 1860.

XI.

INFIDELITY.

For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? — *Romans* iii. 3.

MY hearers must bear with me if I ask them this once more to follow on in the track of the last two morning discourses. In those discourses the starting-point was that real religion consists in simple goodness of heart and life, and not in opinions held. We saw how the principle, as far as it prevails, sets opinion free, — that is, leaves every mind to form its own opinions, calmly, dispassionately, disinterestedly, uninfluenced by any threats of being damned unless those opinions are of a certain kind, there being no such thing as any fatal error of opinion if the opinion be honestly arrived at and held. It was observed — and might have been remarked with more force — that this free, unbiased, unterrified state of mind is much more likely to lead to truth of opinion, or doctrine, than that state of mind in which it is considered dangerous to believe but in one way. We considered how the movement called Unitarianism, embodying this first great principle, and thus proclaiming freedom for the human mind, has taken a position of

great power. Liberty is ever so dear and welcome that every assertion of it is received far and wide with a lively and energetic sympathy. We saw how this principle of religion being goodness and not dogma, together with the principle of liberty accompanying it, had led to what we consider better methods of interpreting Scripture, and had resulted in more rational theological opinions, juster and happier views of the divine purposes and of human destiny. We saw how a system with such characteristics — scriptural, rational, free, liberal, and powerful — is entitled to the reverent love and firm allegiance of those who have been privileged to receive it.

So far we have considered this system, called Unitarianism, in its relation to those less free and less rational systems from which it was a departure and a protest, — that is, in reference to so-called Orthodoxy. It remains now to contemplate it in its relations to infidelity. Whether it produces or tends to a rejection or decay of all religious truth, thought, and interest. This is a very grave question, and a candid examination of it now may be both timely and profitable. Is this system of free inquiry and liberal thought and rational religion drifting its adherents towards the great gulf of infidelity, and under the name of religion preparing the way for the extinction of religion?

One of the readiest and most effective methods of assailing and discrediting any new religious movement has always been to pronounce it in-

fidel in itself or in its tendency. When Jesus Christ introduced his new ideas to the effect that love and obedience and purity and rectitude constituted true religion, — these and not ceremonial observances, — the priests and Pharisees, those who had charge of the religion of the time, regarded his influence as subversive of religion itself; pronounced Him a blasphemer, and had Him crucified as an infidel. When his first disciples went forth into the Roman world and spread their Master's name and doctrine, refusing to cast incense on the altars of the gods of Rome, they were proscribed and put to death as atheists and infidels; and that is the term that still stands applied to them in the official reports and historical literature of that period. When the reformers of the sixteenth century broke with the pope and the church, the orthodox of that time pronounced them infidels, the deniers and enemies of religion. When the New England Unitarians declared their dissent from the creeds of the prevailing churches here, the leaders of Orthodoxy declared, and multitudes in their hearts believed, that it was virtual infidelity, a raising of the standard of revolt against the Christian faith, and none the less for being done in Christ's name. But as the time had soon arrived when Jesus was no longer regarded as an infidel, and again when the first disciples were no longer so stigmatized, and the seceders from Rome had outlived that accusation; so in our time, the Unitarians became, in the progress of years, so numerous and influen-

tial, so much respected for intelligence and character, and many of their men and women became so well known for saintly virtue and piety, that the charge of infidelity against them grew faint by degrees, and has well-nigh ceased in all intelligent quarters; can hardly be spoken in open day; is seen on all hands to be too preposterous. The charge is virtually withdrawn, partly for the reason I have named, and partly because the presence of a liberal sect necessarily liberalizes in some degree all the sects that surround it; and there is hardly any disposition now, except by a few small bigots or lordly anathematizers, and that in dark corners, to reiterate that old, obsolete reproach. Very few, now, of those worth listening to, have either the courage or disposition to say that Unitarianism is infidelity. That is, not regular, staid, old-fashioned, conservative Unitarianism. That — what there is of it — may pass, by a charitable construction, as a form of faith, though an imperfect one, held by sincerely religious persons, and not an outright infidel system, not infidel in spirit and intent. But see, they say, some of the fruits of Unitarianism! See into what religious radicalism some of its adherents pass! What lawless speculations they indulge in; how irreverently they criticise and dissect the Bible; what liberties they take with the historical evidences of Christianity; and how they fall off from Unitarianism itself as being too narrow, too conservative; and what a multifarious brood of free-thinkers, come-outers, athe-

ists, radicals of all sorts, has been nourished in the bosom of Unitarianism, and has then passed off into all manner of dissent and denial, into the great inane of wild, unchristian speculation. That is the infidelity that is now most observed and feared, a vast, heterogeneous collection of nondescript opinions and denials. And that, they say, is the legitimate fruit of Unitarianism, — Unitarianism gone to seed. The enemies of the system point to that with solemn warning as the result of a liberal faith, saying, Beware how you enter upon a course of thought and inquiry that may end thus. Keep to the old paths, lest if you venture upon new ones you come upon the edge of such a precipice.

And some Unitarians themselves become alarmed in the contemplation of these alleged results of the liberal system, and have their misgivings about the safety and wisdom of a system which, however sound in itself, leads to such consequences, and are almost afraid to trust themselves on ground which, however solid itself, has such a fearful margin, such dangerous, outlying swamps of infidelity, in which to founder and perish.

When a year or two ago a respected minister left the Unitarian ranks and formally entered another fold, his declaration of reasons, as well as I can remember it, dwelt principally, if not exclusively, upon this great danger, this fatal tendency. So many who had been Unitarians, or had got imbued with the principles of Unitarianism, who

had gone forth from its bosom, and perhaps were still clinging to the outer edge of its skirts, who in his view had become, or must become, infidels. I will not consider what must be the peculiar constitution of a mind that can reject opinions which it had received as true, because some people wandered from those opinions into error; or that could accept certain other opinions, not as true, but because they seemed safe against that particular danger, but only remark that such a mind probably represents the falterings and misgivings of some who still remain attached to the liberal system. And no doubt there are many persons outside the Unitarian churches who have great sympathy with Unitarian doctrines as scriptural and reasonable, honorable to God and cheerful for men, who yet are kept back from a full acceptance of them by their fears. They are afraid of Unitarianism on account of the mental liberty that goes with it; are afraid of the principle that gives men full freedom to think their own thoughts and adopt whatever opinions they find true, without having their soul's salvation staked upon the absolute correctness of those opinions; afraid of it because it takes off all restraint and may lead, and does lead, sometimes, into they know not what extravagances and absurdities of belief or of denial. Once begin to inquire freely and rationally, and where is there a stopping place to it? they ask. What is to hinder one's going on beyond the limits of any believing at all? If we take the liberty to range over the whole field of

Christian thought unrestrained, what is there to hinder us from overpassing its boundaries and stepping out of it altogether? And they point to the many who do step out of it. The fear of infidelity is thus a great obstacle to the progress of visible and organic Unitarianism.

Now I do not profess much concern about the prosperity of visible and organic Unitarianism; yet this obstacle to it ought to be examined and weighed, — the danger of its leading into infidelity. It is a false alarm and a groundless objection.

In the first place, it is hardly reasonable to hold any system responsible for the undesigned abuses that grow out of it, or to judge it in any way by facts that have merely an historical connection with it. Upon this principle of judging, the pharisaic Judaism of Christ's time would be responsible for, or entitled to, the credit of Christ's own system of thought and teaching, for He was nurtured in its bosom, and was, historically, one of its consequences. Upon this principle, the Church of Rome must be held responsible for the movement of the reformers if it was a bad and infidel movement, and have credit for it if it was Christian and beneficial; for it sprang directly and legitimately out of the heart of that church, and none the less its child for being in the form of a protest, — a child of its loins, and none the less for being a rebellious one. Upon this principle the old puritan Orthodoxy must be held responsible for Unitarianism, must be blamed

for it or credited with it; for, such as it is, good or bad, it germinated and grew up in the very heart of that Orthodoxy, its necessary product, and its lineal successor and heir. Do you say that Unitarianism produces and is responsible for all the modes of belief, or no belief, which have followed or accompanied it historically? I beg you to be consistent, and say also that Orthodoxy is responsible for the Unitarianism that has historically accompanied or followed it, and remember that, if Unitarianism is the mother of all these deformed children which you so loathe and dread, Orthodoxy is the grandmother of them. We are all too closely related to one another in our various systems to make it very safe or consistent to say much about responsibility. If the acorn produces the oak, remember that there was a previous oak which produced the acorn. Intellectually and spiritually we are all near relations, too strictly of one family to admit of any taunts on the question of lineage.

If, however, it shall be insisted that Unitarianism must be judged partly by its consequences, and that one of those consequences is an unprecedented growth and extension of infidelity, the Unitarian need not shrink from that issue, but very cordially accept it.

And I maintain, in the second place, with entire confidence, that on the charge of promoting infidelity, Unitarianism stands better on the record than any other system of belief whatever. Its influence has not been to produce infidelity, but

to prevent it and cure it, and there is less infidelity where this system has a footing than anywhere else in Christendom.

We must admit at the outset, that every prevalent system of belief is accompanied and followed by something that is called infidelity; that is, a dissent, denial, a going farther, going outside of the fold. The shape and style of that dissent or denial or infidelity will depend upon the character of that fold from which it is a breaking away. Orthodoxy, or, as it likes to call itself, the evangelical faith, where it possesses the exclusive ecclesiastical sway, is, and always was, accompanied by its infidelity of a different stamp: let that be admitted. And it is worth while to examine the different characteristics of the two kinds, and see which is to be preferred of the two evils.

And one difference to be noted is this; the infidelity which Orthodoxy generates is apt to be accompanied by hypocrisy, and naturally so. Where Orthodoxy holds absolute sway, opinion is not free. I say that advisedly, though some may think it a calumny. I mean that doctrines are not left to be accepted or rejected solely upon their merits, as being true or false. There may be no legal restraint nor civil penalties, no tortures of the inquisition or the stake; but it is a principle with consistent Orthodoxy that certain opinions must be held as a condition of salvation; that whoso rejects those opinions loses God's favor, loses his soul. He is wept over as an outcast; he is pointed to as a warning; he is

a spiritual pariah; he is denounced as dangerous; he is told, and his friends and neighbors are told, that hell gapes for him; he is approached with a mortifying compassion, or shunned with abhorrence. If, therefore, as will so frequently happen, his mind revolts from those opinions, and casts them off, he is under the strongest possible temptation to conceal his dissent; and indeed it requires extraordinary force and courage to declare it, and to take upon himself the doom of a spiritual leper in his community, and perhaps in his household. So he must suppress the utterance of his thought, do violence to the irresistible conclusions of his God-given reason, deny the light that he sees, and keep on wearing a garb that pinches and suffocates him, taking into his soul the infinite demoralization of a hypocritical conformity. Accordingly, wherever Orthodoxy has undisputed sway, and no liberal system has sprung up or is tolerated, there, as it is well known and confessed on all hands, is an immense amount of concealed infidelity, and the heart of the church is tainted and cankered through and through with the master vice of hypocrisy, that deadliest corruption, alongside of which no real goodness can spring, no virtue blossom in the heart. Under such circumstances there will be great numbers assenting to creeds which they abhor, taking part in observances which they despise as a mummery; using the language and wearing the looks of a high-wrought piety, after it has become to their souls all cant and hollowness;

enacting a daily lie under the very forms of worship; calling that truth which is no truth to them; submitting to ascetic practices which the prevailing fashion of saintship requires, but which all their reason and all their heart protest against as folly and oppression. An hypocrisy that transforms men who, if they were free, would be sincere and rational and noble, into whited sepulchres, all fair without, but spiritual death and utter rottenness within; the mournfullest spectacle of a debased and perishing soul that the heart-searching eye of God has to look upon in all his universe. This is the infidelity, aggravated with hypocrisy, that afflicts every orthodox church where there is no liberal one alongside of it. And none see it more clearly or mourn for it more sincerely than all the good and sincere men in those very churches. They feel it to be their one great humiliation and grief. They are not aware that it is the fault of their system; but it is. It could not be otherwise where a particular set of opinions is held up as necessary to salvation in eternity, and spiritual good repute in time. Infidelity made ten times more the child of hell by hell's first principle of falseness — hypocrisy.

The liberal system, on the other hand, — and this is what makes it the liberal system, — judges no man by his opinions, and holds that God will not judge him by his opinions, nor punish him for erroneous ones, if he only arrive at and hold them honestly, — that religion is not dogma but

goodness. Therefore Unitarians, as far as they are consistent with their system, leave a man untrammeled as to what he shall think, and free to say what he thinks, be it what it may. If he be sincere they do not doom him for his errors, or mourn over his lost soul. They have no frown, no ban, no penalty of lost standing, for the honest thinker, whatever the result of his thinking, and have all respect for the truthful mind, however little of truth, or much of error, it may have reached. Accordingly those who become infidel within the liberal ranks are free to become so, free to declare their doubts and denials; have no inducements to conceal them, suffer no odium for them. They can discuss their difficulties frankly and without scruple, with their ministers or their friends, and so have some chance to get relieved of them. And there can be no doubt that a great many are saved from unbelief by this freedom in confessing and stating their doubts. Skepticism is not half so likely to run into utter denial if permitted to speak out, without shame or fear. Nothing is more fatal to faith than a concealment or suppression of doubt.

The main point of difference is, that under the liberal system infidels have no inducements to be hypocrites. They can retain their integrity; they can be true *men* still, if not Christians. If religious observances are a hollow mockery to them, they can abstain from them, and not be adjudged spiritual reprobates. If they do not believe the approved doctrines, they need not use the lan-

guage of them for a pretense. They are saved from the soul-killing necessity of cant and hypocrisy. They are not made false, through and through, merely because they do not agree in opinion with the majority, or with anybody. Our infidels, such as we may have among us, may be, and I believe generally are, true and sincere men, and that I regard as an immense moral advantage on the liberal side in respect to infidelity.

And it has another still greater moral advantage in this respect; that the infidelity which proceeds from the liberal system possesses a higher moral and spiritual character than that which springs from the Orthodox system.

In those regions and periods in which the Orthodox system has had exclusive possession, infidelity has had a very peculiar and marked character. Where it has not hid itself under the poisonous veil of hypocrisy and false-hearted conformity, it has generally resulted in outright scoffing, a low and corrupt materialism, a profane defiance of all religious ideas, and, but too frequently, an utter abandonment of all moral principle, — reckless antagonism to all that is true and holy in thought and life, — so as to make the very term infidelity synonymous with all mental and material profligacy and abasement. Whereas, the great mass of those who have passed into infidelity from or through the liberal system have been, and are, earnest and honest men, thoughtful and sincere, religious even, in their way, hold-

ing something in supreme reverence, if not the same things that we do. Their infidelity affords no presumption against the purity and uprightness of their lives. Indeed they would generally be said to be fanatical on some moral idea and in some moral direction, running it out into some form of ultraism, — most of them renouncing the Christianity of the church on the ground that it is not Christian enough for them, and cutting loose from it that they may be free, as they say, to carry out to its utmost lengths some principle of justice or love. They are very apt to be philanthropists of one type or another, disturbing us by their zeal and unwisdom, but not leaving us to question their sincerity or the rectitude of their motives. They heap merciless scoff and scorn upon our religious ideas and forms and institutions, but not often upon the great ideas that underlie them all, — God and immortality and love and right. In personal morals they are often ascetic; in domestic and neighborly relationships, affectionate and exemplary; in their plan of life, self-sacrificing. Such is the difference between the two classes of infidels, for which the two systems are severally responsible, — if indeed responsibility is to be predicated in such matters. And it is the difference we should expect to find, judging from the character of the two systems. The orthodox system, whether Catholic or Calvinistic, is, and makes it its glory that it is, at variance with human nature, — a scheme of salvation not deducible from, and not in ac-

cordance with, human reason, — something quite apart from and above even the best instincts of the heart, and the best moral principles of the conscience. It is not developed from the soul, but superinduced upon it, — a plan arbitrarily prescribed by Deity for the soul's salvation ; its effectiveness conditioned upon our understanding that plan, and believing in the rather complicated details of it. To believe in that plan is religion, the whole of it, the essence of it, — virtuous principles and good affections being the mere incidents of religion, not the substance of it. Now, such being the idea of religion under the orthodox system, those who reject that idea and that plan have nothing left that they are permitted to call religion. It has always been impressed upon them that mere morality, or goodness, is utterly valueless except in connection with certain modes of belief, and in losing those modes of belief they of course lose everything ; they must fall into utter infidelity, and there is nothing to break their fall. Not to believe is to fall so low that they cannot fall any farther. Their moral nature has never been cultivated, or held to be of any account, except in connection with that system of belief ; when that is gone, all is gone. How can it be, then, but that the infidelity which is produced under such circumstances should leave the soul utterly barren of religious influences, the artificial stripped away and the natural never developed. There will be, indeed, spiritual desolation which must run out into scoffing and spiritual dark-

ness, and unredeemed licentiousness of thinking and living. And that is, and always was, and must needs be, the type of the infidelity that springs up under the orthodox system.

The liberal system, on the other hand, building itself upon reason and upon the natural sentiments of the heart, cultivates with great care, of course, the natural, moral sentiments and affections — teaches that goodness is religion. Therefore, when any of those who have been bred under its influence come to reject its theological doctrines, they cannot be told that on that account they have lost all their religion; and have never been led to think — and are not permitted to think even if they would — that they have risen above, or fallen below, the great principles of rectitude, love, and purity, which constitute the essence of religion and secure the favor of God. Wherever they may wander speculatively, they have to carry with them the elements of religion, — their own moral nature. They have been trained under a system that holds them to their spiritual allegiance to God by every fibre of their hearts, by every principle of rectitude that they apprehend, by every tie of brotherhood that binds them to their kind. They have been taught that theology, or opinion, is secondary, and goodness alone primary; that the divine law is irrepealable, the divine favor conditioned on nothing but obedience; that true religion is not an organization or a creed, or a ritual which may change, but a principle of holiness that changes not; that cannot be fled

from, and will not be taken away. They have been taught that true religion is in perfect accordance with honest reason and right feeling, and that, however opinions may change, religion itself does not take off its restraints, nor withhold its delights, its comforts, or its rewards.

Accordingly, whenever under this system persons become speculatively or theologically infidel, it does not follow that they must fall into infidelity of the heart or life; and it is found that they generally do not; but are good and sincere men, leading possibly a more Christian life than many that remain within the Christian fold. I do not say that it is always so, but such is the characteristic of what is called infidelity under the liberal system, and we have ample reason why we should expect it to turn out so.

If, therefore, it is right to judge any system by the infidelity that grows up under it, and if there must be more or less infidelity under every system, I thank God that that which is chargeable upon the liberal system is what it is, and not what the opposite system has to deal with; that it is thoughtful, moral, philanthropic, however wild in its speculations, revolutionary in its spirit, and fanatical in its movements; that it is that, and not scoffing denial of every divine thought and holy principle, and an abandonment to a godless theory and a lawless life, and a contempt and hatred for every religious bond. If we must be answerable for either kind of infidelity, let it be that which the liberal system is chargeable with and not the other.

So far from its being true that Unitarianism has brought in a flood of infidelity, I solemnly believe it is and has proved the most effectual barrier against infidelity that has been raised in this age. It has saved its millions from falling into that gulf. Ours is an age in which reason must and would have waked up and asserted its rights; and hosts upon hosts, rejecting the orthodox system, would have gone over into utter denial of all divine truth and law, had there not been this liberal system interposed to arrest their steps and give them a refuge in which they could be at once rational and religious. And if any have still gone on through this system into outside infidelity, they have carried with them an influence that has leavened and greatly redeemed even that, and made infidelity itself another thing from what it was.

Indeed, what we have been saying is enough to remind us that we must be careful how we brand this or that mental position with the name of infidelity in its bad sense. I confess myself not so clear as to what real infidelity is. I see so many good and pure men, and spiritually-minded men, too, who have that name applied to them, and are themselves ready to bear it, that it has almost ceased to be a term of reproach, and one might esteem it an honor to bear it if he could have the heart and character that go with it. We are not called upon to judge it, but to take care that it do not judge us before the bar of God, and find us wanting.

We may rightly deplore in anybody the loss of that belief which we hold precious; but remember the vital faith of the heart may remain dear to God, notwithstanding.

We regret the wild and turbulent vagaries of free speculation, and yet we may glory in the liberty that permits them, and in the vigorous soil that produces them. They are the price we must pay for liberty of thought, and the boon is worth a million times what it costs. And let us not fear these things. What is false and unfounded in them must disappear and come to nought if left free, and what is true and noble in them will live, thank God! and secure its place in the heart of the world. So liberty, free thought, is our franchise from God, and the final results of it must be good, and only good, tending to the glory of God, and to nothing else. That door of liberty has been opened, through the instrumentality of the liberal system, and what man with a freedom-loving, Anglo-Saxon heart within him, does not rejoice to see that it is open, and to believe that it never can be shut again? The main result of that opening, in the long run, and even already, is not infidelity, but faith; and the Unitarian movement can be regarded by its friends in no more gratifying and satisfactory aspect than in its relations to infidelity.

January 22, 1860.

XII.

ONE FAITH.

One faith. — *Ephesians* iv. 5.

IN the three connected discourses just preached here, relating to the character, position, and claims of what is called liberal Christianity, it may have been observed that nothing has been said about faith. I doubt if the word has been used more than once, and yet it is a word of immense significance, a word of constant use in the Scriptures, and filling a large space in all Christian literature; and it has been universally conceded that the thing called faith is, by its presence or absence, its strength or its weakness, the measure or the test of Christian character, — a religious state of the soul. I have spoken largely of opinions, doctrines, systems, but not a word of faith. The omission has not been accidental, nor the result of inadvertence, or of a wish to put the word out of sight or out of use; but it has been omitted, or rather reserved, for a separate consideration, because it seemed important not to confound faith with mere opinions or speculative tenets, but to discriminate between a man's faith

and his theological system, and show that they are not one and the same thing.

But it is time now to consider what faith is and what it is not, — its rightful place in the order of religious thought and experience. And it is a word that cannot be disposed of by any single brief definition, for it is a state of mind that has infinitely varied phases and directions and combinations and results; and any description of it must be extended and complicated enough to embrace the description of all the high affections and virtuous principles and devout moods of the soul. The word is used in the New Testament in so many different connections, and with so many different shades of meaning, that it would be a tedious and not very satisfactory process to make selections of texts and classify them so as to exhaust the subject by an analysis of Scripture quotations. We should be wearied out with details before we reached any result. I must try rather to indicate the result, and leave the details of textual interpretation and comparison to your personal leisure and inquiry.

We have shown that the most distinguishing feature of Christianity, as liberal Christians understand it, is this: that true religion does not consist in dogma or observance, but in personal goodness; and according to this view faith can be nothing less than that state of the soul which generates personal goodness, that inner fountain of spiritual life which is called the gift or inspiration of God's Spirit, and out of which proceed

holy desires, just purposes, loving affections, piety, meekness, patience, truthfulness, all noble actions, all beautiful living. Faith is the fountain, these are the streams. Faith is the inner germ; these are the visible blossomings and fruitage. Faith is the soul, and these the body, of holy living. Faith the basis; these the superstructure. Faith the inspiration; these the outward expression it takes, and the visible forms in which it clothes itself and goes forth. Faith is the root; and these are the branches.

But this description is too vague and general. We want to know what faith is to a man's consciousness and experience. We want to know, not only what its results are, but what it is itself, how it feels, and moves within, and how it gives witness of its presence and agency. Let me say, then, as a nearer approximation to a specific definition, that faith is a believing temper or tendency of the mind, taking a spiritual and moral direction. It is that state or tendency by which the soul is disposed or impelled to regard spiritual existences and moral distinctions as realities, and as the surest and the greatest realities; to discern a Creator in his works, a Lawgiver in the working of his laws, a Father in the tokens of his care and love. It is something that makes the soul feel child-like and trustful, and makes it look up and behold, with devout joy, a Being to trust in and to lean upon. It is that spiritual eye by which some persons see that moral goodness and purity are the supreme beauty; that jus-

tice is the eternal law of things and souls; that love is the one measureless wealth and joy; that sin is the one deformity and woe of the world, and repentance and renewal the one glorious remedy, and compassion and mercy the sweetest and the surest attributes of the divine nature. It is the believing, the confiding, the uplooking spirit, seeing more than the senses can see, objects and interests above these gross, material ones; conceiving and aspiring to a life above the animal life; catching eagerly at every inspiring word and example that brightens and confirms its own visions and strengthens its confidence. It is the spiritual or the religious element in man, — that which disposes him and enables him to worship and obey, and trust a something higher than himself, and to do nobler deeds, and live a purer life, and realize higher ideals of right and love than he has yet attained to. It is the element of the human constitution that has produced noble and saintly characters and lives in every age of the world, and under all religious dispensations. All religious systems are but the efforts of this believing spirit to put itself into concrete and substantial forms.

Such is faith in general. Christian faith is that same religious element, or believing and uplooking spirit, as especially called forth, directed, and shaped by Jesus Christ, by his teachings and his personal character and history and inspiring appeal and example, — the same believing and uplooking spirit as modified and developed by Him,

taking Him for spiritual Master, as one who knew God more profoundly than any other has known Him, His purposes, His law, His love; as one who had a more distinct and sure feeling of the life to come than any other has had; as one who knew better than any other what man should be and might become, and what it is infinitely desirable and blessed that he should be; as one more deeply inspired with divine wisdom than any other, and whose words and walk and life exhibit the highest beauty and perfection of humanity. And seeing and feeling that He presented the very pattern of a perfect life, that He was true and holy, and finding that through Him there comes to every one that turns to Him and cleaves to Him an inspiration that kindles what is best in man, even the desire of all excellence, of pardon and peace and a better life, imparts strength, awakens hope, quickens love, gives a voice to the prayer of faith, and brings on the repose of perfect trust.

Christian faith is to accept Christ thus. It is a thing of degrees. This is what it would be, and is, in its most perfect and advanced stage; but it is Christian faith in its feeble beginnings, even though it should comprehend far less than this. It is faith for the soul to take any hold of Him with reverent love, with any perception or feeling that God was with him, that He was good and the inspirer of goodness. He himself sometimes commended persons for their faith, when they gave no other signs of it than a mere con-

viction that God empowered Him to heal their diseases. "I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel," He said, concerning the centurion, who had shown no other manifestation of faith in Him than to express a confidence that He had but to speak the word and his sick servant at home would be healed. Even that speck and smallest germ of faith He knew was so genuine, and proceeded from such a believing spirit, that it would require but time and a further communion to expand it into an influence which should fill the soul with the spiritual life and love. Slight as it was, it did recognize God in Christ, even though in the narrowest way, and in a physical way. It opened the door to higher inspirations in the centurion's heart and the soldier's faith. He called it faith, and rejoiced in it.

In the view of liberal Christianity, the great error of Christendom has been to regard Christian faith as consisting in the belief of a set of theological doctrines; and then, if faith is, as all admit it to be, the vital principle of the religious life, and if it is the belief of certain speculative opinions, then of course those opinions or doctrines become vital and absolutely necessary to true religion in the soul. The conclusion is inevitable if we admit the premises; but we deny the premises. We deny that speculative opinions about Christ constitute the Christian faith. To clear this matter up we have nothing to do but to go back to Christ himself. In several instances he strongly commended persons for their

faith, but we know the faith He spoke of was not a belief in the Trinity or Vicarious Atonement, or any of that class of doctrines. He had never said a word upon these subjects. He had never spoken of his own nature, never called Himself by any other title than that modest one which He loved best — the Son of Man; had never spoken of his own blood and death, unless it were to give an intimation to his friends that He should not be long with them. He had only spoken such things as the Sermon on the Mount, and a few simple parables, illustrating the character of good men and the love of God, and gone about comforting the afflicted and healing the sick and telling men of the heavenly Father, and what it was their duty and their joy to be and to do in all simplicity and purity of living, and how He knew that what He said was approved by God and was the very truth. This was all He had taught, — nothing that men would now call a theology or a scheme of salvation, — mere goodness and piety. He had said nothing about anything else. And yet those who had heard nothing else, and knew nothing else, received from him the hearty commendation of having faith, and a saving faith. They did not even take in all that He had said, sometimes only a very little of it; perhaps could appreciate, as we have seen, nothing more about Him than some beneficent act; and yet their simply coming to Him in a believing spirit, having so much sympathy with Him, so much readiness to listen to Him and learn of Him,

any such little bond of union with Him, He called faith, and was glad in it, and gave it his benediction, and so stamped it as Christian faith and a saving faith.

And how should the standard or test of Christian faith be of a different kind now from what He made it? Was not his good enough and high enough? What right has the disciple, managing his church in his name, to require such different tests from those of the Master? Jesus was indeed no theologian, in the modern sense of the term. He had no idea of religion but as simple goodness. He had not faith according to the modern standards.

I should be sorry to fall into the language of vulgar abuse, but it is the simple fact, and an instructive one to consider, that if Jesus were now on earth, there is no evangelical church into which He could be admitted as a member by simply repeating anything He said, or all that He said, when He was on earth. He would have to add something to that, assent to many doctrines which He never said a word about, or else be excluded as unsound in the faith. It sounds unkind to say that, but it is most manifestly true. If He should adhere to his own words or thoughts, not a church could admit Him as a brother, not a bishop could lay hands upon Him without violating his rubric, not a synod could consistently license Him to preach the gospel. Not but that they love and honor Him as much as anybody can, and would fly to Him with rapture, if they

knew who or what He was; but if they did not know that, and tried Him by their creeds and standards of faith, and He had nothing to say but just what He said there in Palestine, He would not pass; they would have to reject Him. So false is the position in which good Christians have placed themselves by identifying faith with theological opinions, and not observing the broad distinction between them. Their opinions, the theology of those churches which I have referred to, may be absolutely true and sound; that is not the question now; but supposing them to be so, is it not obviously a great mistake to regard them as faith, and the only faith, when we see that such a view would exclude from among Christians the Master of Christians himself, unless He would admit as the essentials of faith things which He had never said anything about, and which those whom He approved as having faith knew nothing about, except upon the most violent hypothesis that He forebore to speak of the things most important to his religion, or that the most important things which He did say are not reported in his biography. It is a curious fact, — I say it not for boasting or for disparagement, but nobody can deny it, and it is a suggestive fact, and I wish it could be considered by those whom it most concerns, — that the Unitarian churches, and some others similarly constituted, are positively the only ones to which our Lord could be admitted if He were here in the flesh, unless He had wholly changed his views as to what faith is.

Let us not underrate the interest, the importance, the intellectual necessity of a theology, and of speculative doctrines. The human mind, where it is developed into a state of activity, will, by a law of its nature, ponder and discuss those deep, mysterious questions which lie back of and around the sphere of the Christian revelation. It will strive to settle for itself those problems of being and of destiny which it has not pleased God to unfold clearly, and which Jesus Christ did not see fit to touch upon as belonging to his religion. A speculative theology there must be, and may well be; and if there be *one* theology, there must be many. These are subjects upon which there can be no unanimity of opinion, and on which different minds, variously constituted and biased, come to different conclusions if they are left free, as God made them and meant them to be.

There must be many theologies, but there can be only one Christian religion, — a diversity of dogmas, but one faith. The Bible itself contains more than one theology. The theology of James is different from that of Paul, and that of John different from them both, — and yet they have but one faith in common. They all look to Christ as with a single eye, and beneath the theologic veil which they severally threw over Him according to their mental idiosyncrasies, saw but one and the same Christ; one who showeth us the Father, his will and his love; one who embodied in Himself all goodness, and inspired all goodness; one whose heart was all obedience and trust, and de-

sired to bring other hearts into harmony with his own; one whose heart was a pure, undimmed flame of love and piety, which they felt kindling a like flame in their own. They had no difference of opinion as to the temper their Master would have them cherish, the life He would have them lead, the hope and joy He would have them feel. There was but one tie that bound them all to Him, — that of a reverent and confiding love, a believing sympathy which drew them to Him, — the beautiful and sinless one, — whom to listen to and follow and resemble was to have Him for their Saviour, their inspiring guide on earth, their forerunner within the veil. There was but one faith in the hearts of them all.

And so always, so now. There is a great diversity of forms and opinions amongst Christians, and yet but one faith amongst them all. There is a loud jangle of disputation, but it is only theological. The religion of one church or one man is, as far as it goes, in perfect harmony with the religion of any other church or man; there is no difference, except that of more and less. It is true that one's theology gets mingled with his religion; his dogmatic opinions blend more or less with the faith of the heart, and color it, and give a tone and direction to it, so that one man's religion shall look a different thing from another's, and when they discuss matters together it shall seem as if they agreed in nothing; it is true that most of the discussion which goes on is about theology, while in matters of real religion there

is a silence and a reserve which seems to put them in the background; and, as a consequence of this, many come to think that their theology is their religion, or something higher and better than religion, and that correctness of theological opinions is more important than goodness of heart and life. It is the theology that makes the noise and the show, while the faith that works below is silent, unproclaimed, and almost unobserved, because it makes no din or discord. The diversities are apparent, the unity is latent. And yet there are times when good men forget their superficial differences, and feel and recognize the deeper unity. There are occasions when the mere intellectual and dogmatic differences recede into their proper insignificance, postponed and forgotten, and the one faith mounts to its place of divine supremacy, and reveals the deeper oneness of the heart, — innumerable occasions in every-day private life.

I recall to mind one occasion of a rather public character, which illustrates my thought. A few years ago one of the great ocean steamers was crossing the Atlantic, with a very large company on board, and among them many clergymen, and others eminent in church affairs, who had been attending the world's convention in London. A terrible storm arose and continued long. "Thrice on deck," said the captain, "I thought destruction was inevitable; each time a wave of such magnitude covered the ship that I thought it was all over with us." All on board expected

death hour by hour. They saw their ship dismantled, deluged, and, as they believed, breaking to pieces before the fury of the elements. They gave themselves up for lost. It lasted thirty-six hours; they had time to think. The passengers met at night in the cabin, — their last night of life, as they believed. They asked such as would to lead in prayer, and surely not a soul of them all was prayerless then. They listened together to the solemn and composing words of Scripture, and they desired, with common consent, if the storm would spare them long enough, to commemorate their Saviour by the communion rite which He gave to his disciples. And so they gathered round the table and partook together of the symbols of the Redeemer's body and blood. They all felt comforted by the blessed ordinance, and many a bosom, before tossed with fear, was now tranquil through faith. "Oh, it was a night," — says the describer, — "a night and a communion to be long remembered." They separated and went apart in family groups or alone, to die. How was it that they could all sit down together to observe the ordinance, as if they were of one fold, knowing no differences? On shore and in safety they would not have done it. The Baptist would not sit down with Congregationalists; the High Churchman would not take the sacrament from any but a priest episcopally ordained; the Trinitarian could not join the Unitarian in that sacred observance. On shore they could not; but they could there. And why?

Because on shore, in all fair weather, theology would be uppermost — opinions. But there, in the face of death, mere opinions and intellectual distinctions vanished from thought, and in that great and solemn exigency something diviner than opinion rose up, even faith, and faith is but one, and it made them one. It was no time for the quibbles of criticism, or the drawing of artificial lines, or the setting up of speculative tests, or the assuming of doctrinal superiority. It was a time for the religious emotions to come into play, unincumbered with opinion; and those are the same in all men. They found, for the time, that there was but one faith.

And so it is in a degree in the more common scenes of life. All good men find out now and then, and for the time, that whatever may be their diversities of opinion, they have but one faith, one religion. In religious people, their religion will now and then get the better of their theology. In seasons of great and overwhelming affliction the soul takes precedence of the intellect, and opinions are little thought of, and faith is everything; and when any two mourn together, however they may have been divided in doctrine, the holy sympathies of sorrow bring their common faith into the ascendant, and a common grief, a common consolation, a common hope, reveals that they are one in heart, one in religion.

In the immediate presence of death the departing one forgets the distinctions of his theology, and reposes in faith, feeling that it is the same

faith that soothes all pious and hopeful death-beds. In all deeds and enterprises of Christian love, when the heart goes forth in disinterestedness, followed by foot and hand in errands of mercy, the faith which works by love grows paramount, and theology is deposed, and they who meet and coöperate in such things find they have but one religion, and receive one and the same message and commandment from their common Master.

In all the great hours of noble resolve and high aspiration, or cleansing repentance, or heart-felt prayer, when the spirit is wrestling with the soul, and eternal realities grow palpable, and duty looks sacred, and the love of God warms and shines round the soul, and the tie of brotherhood is re-knit, and the grace of God is pouring in, and the soul feels itself thereby growing whole cubits of stature in an hour,— who then thinks of dividing the lines of doctrine? It is the hour in which faith triumphs, and a man discovers that all good men are his brethren in the faith, brethren to help and be helped by, brethren to learn from, to take inspiration and impart it, all dear alike to the one Father of spirits.

The experiences of life working upon a believing spirit and a susceptible heart tend to subordinate opinion to faith, and break down the barriers of sect. I think I have observed that advancing age has a strong tendency to soften theological asperities, and efface intellectual differences. An old man or woman who is religious

is seldom intolerant or uncharitable; they are mellowed by experience; it is shocking and painful where they are not. They are satisfied with good people, whatever their opinions, and it sounds strange and hard for them to say that God's favor depends upon dogma.

The intercourse of life, the sympathies of friendship and good neighborhood and kind relationships are constantly bringing good people together and showing them that in the great things of religion they are one, and that the mere matters of fallible opinion that have divided them are transient and insignificant compared with the deeper faith of the heart that unites them. The good affections are all on the side of faith; the conscience is on the side of faith; all the tender and humane sympathies are on the side of faith; sorrow and death are on the side of faith; and it were strange indeed if speculative opinions, the mere outside conjectures or fallible reasoning of the intellect, should always and forever stand against these. They cannot and do not. Religion draws men together stronger and faster, we trust, than theology can put them asunder; and the faith of the heart is more than a match in the long run for the pride of dogma and the distractions of dispute.

Such is faith; everywhere one and the same thing, colored on the outside by doctrine, but not changed in its inner essence. It is that which all good men hold in common. It is that in the soul which, amid all diversities of opinion, feels after

God, bows in reverence, and looks up in trust. It is that which yearns towards the glorious and beautiful Christ, and stretches out its hand to take hold of his hand, and sits down at his feet to learn of Him. It is that which reveals a brother to pity and to save, in every man that lives, and twice a brother in every good and pure and loving man. It is that which kindles pure desire and spiritual aspiration, and braces to great resolves, and breathes the love of goodness through the heart, and sheds abroad in it the love of God. It lies back of all theologies; it breathes in the true worship of all churches, and runs its fine veins and lovely tints through the skeleton of all honest creeds. Where it is present it sanctifies all opinions; where it is absent all opinions are but a sham and a delusion. Where it is strong it is victory; where it is feeble it is humility and hope. In the still closet hour it is a prayer, abroad amid duties and trials it is a law, in human intercourse it is love, in temptation it is a shield, in suffering it is patience, in sorrow it is peace, in death it is a vision of the heavenly glories.

There is but one faith; it is the soul of all goodness. Let us pray for it and cherish it, and recognize it wherever it appears, however disfigured by errors of opinion; and with it put on charity and meek tolerance, and the liberal spirit and that crowning fact of the Christian life, — a sense of the universal unity and brotherhood.

January 29, 1860.

XIII.

THE WINDOWS TOWARDS JERUSALEM.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. — *Daniel* vi. 10.

"HIS windows being open toward Jerusalem." That is the clause that arrests my attention.

Some six hundred years before Christ, Judea was conquered, and Jerusalem sacked by the Assyrian king. The flower of the Jewish people were carried away captives to Babylon, and afterwards the masses of the people shared the same fate. Daniel was among the first that went. It was in his early youth that this captivity befel him. He appears to have been treated in the main with kindness and distinction. By the force of his abilities and his character he won the confidence of the king. Under Oriental despotisms it was not uncommon, and has not been in modern times, for captives and slaves to be promoted to high places of power and honor. This was Daniel's fortune. Absolute monarchs are capricious, and the most successful of their courtiers must encounter enmities and rivalries. Daniel

sometimes rises to the highest and again falls to the lowest, — one day sitting next to the sovereign, and the next thrown to the lions to be devoured. On the whole his life was outwardly prosperous, and he maintained well his high position, — one of the men whom it is hard for conspiracies to overreach, and for jealousy and power to put down and keep down. But while he thus maintained himself as prince and minister of a great empire, his heart remained a Hebrew heart. In spite of all the blandishments and coercions of idolatry, he clave piously to the God of his fathers. The splendors of Babylon did not wean him from the fond memories of his native Zion. Though so early transplanted, Judea remained the country of his affections and the home of his aspirations. A thorough Jew as he was, no length of time could transform him into anything but a Jew, or transfer his heart's fealty from the Jordan to the Euphrates, — always an exile, looking back fondly and forward yearningly, to the only spot that a true son of Israel ever felt to be his home, though but dimly remembering it, perhaps, and scarcely hoping ever to see it.

I do not propose to follow the fortunes of this Prophet of Israel, or relate the incidents of his life spent there in that great heathen capital; but that little allusion to the windows of his chamber seems to me to suggest thoughts enough for a discourse. I think it a very significant and touching allusion, telling a great deal more than

the writer thought of. The writer seemed only to be thinking of the striking incident of the lions' den, and how the prophet came to be thrown into it, and what a wondrous deliverance he had from that almost sure destruction. But in these few words about the windows he unwittingly opens up a revelation of the most interior life of the illustrious exile, — a far larger chapter of his real heart-history than could be contained in the narrative of a hundred court conspiracies, or an encounter with all the lions that ever crouched or roared through the jungles of Asia.

In his private hours, the hours he could spare for meditation and devotion, Daniel would go apart to his chamber and open the windows that faced towards the Holy City of his people. He would ascertain exactly in what direction it lay, under what star by night, in a range with what tower or tree by day. There, to his mind's eye, and almost to his fleshly eye, the City of David lay spread out, set in its encircling hills. There it was, just so many leagues off, away in the west. As he looked towards the very spot, it became a very real and vivid presence to him. The windows assisted his thoughts; sitting there, or kneeling, and looking forth, his mind could travel over in an instant, and annihilate the dividing space; he could come into immediate communion with the revered saints and heroes of his race; he could go and sit down with Abraham at his tent door, and walk with Isaac at even-tide, and Jacob among the flocks of Laban.

The wonders that Jehovah had wrought through Joseph and Moses and Joshua and Samuel were his daily reading, from out that window. There stretched the walls of Zion, and there soared the temple of Solomon, visible to his abstracted gaze. There curled the smoke of sacrifice, and there was the shining over the mercy-seat. Looking thither he feasted his mind on the great and tender memories of a wonderful history. He could return to the house of his own fathers, the home of his childhood, and renew all the associations of those tender years. There he could pray most heartily, for he kneeled facing the very altar he had pressed in his youth. If his faith in the God of his fathers ever faltered or dimmed amid the idolatries of Babylon, he had but to look forth from that window to rekindle the old fire in the heart, and renew his vows to Him who had chosen his seat on the heights of Zion. There, too, he would sit and look, thinking over and over, in fond prophetic anticipation, of the time that was sure to come when his afflicted people would go back from their captivity, and rebuild their broken walls. That road, stretching there before him to the westward, was the road they would take, and those hills yonder, through which they would defile, would resound with the shouts of their deliverance and with those old songs of Zion that they never would sing till they should return, and their harps should be taken down from the willows where they hung mute till that time should come. And come it would, he

saw and knew. Looking out of his window to the very spot, he saw the visions of the prophets becoming realized, as it were, before his gaze. He saw the dear city rising again from its ashes, and putting on new glories; he saw greater prophets arising there to lead the people, and One, greatest of all, bearing the Messiah's commission. He himself might not share in person the triumphs of that great day, — indeed he was getting too old for that, — but it was none the less present and joyous to his thought. There lay the future history of his race, — not here in Babylon, but there across the hills in Jerusalem. He looked forth and saw it, and dwelt upon it, and the great anticipation was his soul's life, the most living part of his life.

Thus it was that the exile, instead of pining from homesickness, and despairing under a galling servitude, kept a window open looking towards all that was bright and glad to his imagination. That window was the passage out of which his mind passed from bondage and degradation to freedom and happiness. While he could open that window, not the Assyrian king, but the God of Israel, was his Lord. There he could sit and look forth, and feast himself on the glorious memories and mounting hopes and all sweet imaginations of home and country. Through that window he could escape from the sins and disgusts of a foul idolatry, and all the hardships and perils of a capricious despotism, the fiery furnace, and the lions' den, and go shade himself under

the vines and olive-trees of Judea, and cool himself in the sacred Jordan, and meditate on the side of Olivet, and be peaceful and free. Hated Babylon did not hold him; his real life was not lived there, so long as he had windows that looked towards Jerusalem, and he could open them at pleasure, and through that splendid clairvoyance — a spiritual faculty which all men partake of — could transport himself to his spirit's home, and dwell among its ideals, and make all the past, and all the future, and all the invisible, present and his very own.

I think there is a great lesson for us all in that little mention of Daniel's opening his window towards his Jerusalem. We are all more or less rigorously held captive by the circumstances of our outward condition; we are never quite free to be where we would. Compulsions and limitations press upon us. The exigencies of our lot imprison us. We are always conscious of a sort of homesick longing for some other and better state, something that has been, or that might be, or will be, or that at least looks possible and desirable. There is almost always a certain degree of hardness and confinement, and galling restriction, in the immediate circumstances that hem us in. And now and then it is very hard, — to some persons continuously hard, through circumstances of severe labor, or of bitter disappointment, or desolating sorrows, or enslaving temptations and habits, fears, perils, sufferings, despondencies, of whatever kind.

Many a man's present actual condition is a perfect Babylon, a bondage, a state of exile from the soul's freedom and peace, a shutting out from all the fondest desires of the heart. And in the most favored lot there are exigencies that gall the limbs and hem in the liberties of the soul, and expose it to many an irksome endurance, and many an Assyrian humiliation, and many a sense of baffled endeavors and hampered faculties and darkened hopes. The immediate circumstances, the actual condition of the present moment, is never, for anybody, sufficient for his liberty, his contentment, his aspirations, or for his spiritual health and Christian character. We cannot live well or wisely or happily, unless we have the means of escaping occasionally in spirit, and to a greater or less distance, from these daily scenes and straits and surroundings. There must be windows to our chamber of life, looking afar, and towards fairer scenes. And there are such windows provided, and we must open them, and keep them open, and sit at them, and kneel at them, and look away into the horizon, and breathe the airs that come from the distance, and so win freedom and expansion for our lives.

I have read somewhere that it is, or should be, a high principle of art, that in painting an interior view of any room or building, there should always be represented some outlookinto the outdoor world. Some window or some door left ajar. If this be wanting, the picture will not

give pleasure, the writer said, and the spectator will have a feeling of confinement and of suffocation. But give him an opening, so he can look out, whether it be over city roofs, or into green landscapes, or the blue sky, — somehow into the infinite out-doors, — and he breathes freely, and even the prison cell looks then like a part of God's world, and a little Dutch kitchen, which so many artists have represented, looks genial and comfortable and home-like; and without such outlet a palace hall on the canvas will feel close and undesirable.

I do not know how true this may be in art; I think it must be true, because the same principle is so very sound and so very essential in all human life. There is no condition of life in which a human being can live happily or nobly, unless it have windows for the soul to look through, and breathe through, commercing with things fair and free in the distance. Such windows are provided by the Great Architect. They are memory and imagination and sympathy and hope and religious faith. These are the windows to be opened, and to sit at, and kneel at, like the exiled Hebrew in his chamber at Babylon.

We sometimes wonder, perhaps, at seeing persons who appeared to have everything about them to enjoy, their circumstances all very admirable, beautifully housed and conditioned, who yet are not happy, and their life is not lovely or noble. Probably it is because they have no windows to their lot, or do not open them, and no magnifi-

cence of architecture or beauty of furnishing can make a house look well, or feel well, without windows looking to the grass and the blue of hills and sky. And we sometimes wonder, too, how people not well situated, with a hard, unlovely environment immediately about them, yet live in it contentedly, pleasantly, and admirably. It is because there are windows to their room, and they open them towards the fair and grand things of the universe.

We must open our windows, — that of memory, for instance. It is very pleasant and very profitable to hold frequent converse with scenes and days gone by. Though they may not have been altogether lovely and agreeable in the passing, yet time and distance lend them an enchantment. When we have gone on far in life, it is good to look back to the days of childhood, to early ties and the early home. They look bright to us now as they stretch back into the fair morning of our life. They bring back tenderness of feeling, and much of the lost simplicity and purity of the heart; they keep the heart young amid the ageing and withering influences of the present. Old people who are cheerful and pleasant, we generally find, are fond of talking about the old times, the old scenes of their childhood, early recollections, early pleasures, and even early hardships and sorrows. They sit much at that window of their chamber which looks towards that Jerusalem. When people forget their childhood, and care no more for it, their heart is hard-

ening; they are getting closed in and stifled between the four walls of their present condition; be that condition what it may, it is cramping and gloomy unless it have windows. We must carry along with us all that we can of our young experiences, affections, and memories; never part company with them. It is like looking out into the sunrise, carrying something of the morning's freshness through our whole day; it is a looking away over green slopes, stretching into the east. We should never let that window get closed.

Then, next, there is the window of the sympathies. The house we live in, — or our actual, material condition of life, — however favored, will be narrow and dark unless we have the means and the habit of keeping up communication with scenes and interests beyond it; and though it be narrow and dark in itself, it can be made airy and bright by having an open window of sympathy. Sympathy in some direction there should always be, intellectual or affectionate, or both; sympathy with something apart from us and beyond us. That sympathy may take the form of a love of nature, its beautiful sights and sounds, its flowers and fields and woods, its chemical mysteries, its marvelous organic combinations, the grand expanse, or some little nook, of this vast temple of nature, a taste for something that is lovely or sublime, which proves to so many a window to let in fresh air and sweet sunshine, that converts the grimmest walls, even of a poor condition, into the pleasantest of homes.

The love of nature or of art in any of its modes and forms opens the window towards a very fair Jerusalem.

Or it may be a sympathy with the character and doings of men, the march of human history, the majesty of old heroic times, the loveliness of times that look pastoral and golden to us, characters that we delight to dwell with, though they have long since left the earth and we can reach them only through our sympathies, — history, biography, glowing intellectual retrospection, bringing all the dead back, living, into our presence.

Or it may be the sympathy with the more abstruse and abstract knowledge, with the great problems of thought that have engaged the highest minds in all times; stores of wisdom, the pleasures of strong, intellectual exercise, successful expeditions among the little islands or into the great continents of truth. Many a Babylonian lot in life, desolate and hard in itself, has been cheered and exalted for those who have the taste and the opportunity for such studies.

Or it may be the sympathy with living persons, and present interests lying just outside of us, or far around us. An interest in the goings on of the nations and the great world, or in the welfare of neighbors and friends, or in objects of compassion and charity, good movements for the amelioration of the condition of many, or a few. Sympathy, in some form of disinterestedness, enables us to look out, look away, so that our personal lot in life shall not become a dark and

windowless dungeon of selfishness, which for him who lives in it, though he build it ever so large, and adorn it ever so much, is no better than a prison, and will stifle him, and make his life mean and hard and wretched, be it ever so fine looking, and covet it who will.

Then, next, there is the window of the imagination. This is like an oriel window, many-sided, looking in various directions, with front-lights and side-lights. If we open it wide it lets in beauty from all sources into the chamber of our life. Everybody's life is, at the best, meagre and barren without some touch of the poetic element to transfigure it, to soften its roughness, and smooth its sharp edges, and make it look large and noble, by the mysterious laws of spiritual perspective. Poetry is no mere thing of books and rhymes, but a quality of the soul. It is the faculty of visiting sometimes and bringing home the ideals of things fairer and better than these coarse, material realities, that make up the hard circumstances of daily life. Children have it when they are able to convert a rough stick into a war-steed, a little torn rag into a nation's banner, a piece of tin into the sword of Wallace or Saladin or Washington, a little corner of a barn-chamber into the court of Zenobia or Maria Theresa. Poor people have it, and are looking out of that window when you see them smiling with some ethereal expression amid their coarse labors and squalid environment. They are looking away at some forms of beauty which, as they look, come up to them and become their own.

Most happy in its constitution or its training is the mind that has a large possession of beautiful images ever passing through it; is companioned along its path, which may be a rough one, by many lovely forms gathering to its side from every quarter of the horizon. It peoples the narrow chamber of its earthly lot with visitors from every realm of creation, makes its loneliest hours sociable, its hardest toils lightened by invisible helps, and enjoys the whole universe for its heritage. Who could live with any cheerfulness or elevation of mind without some such windowed out-look through which to hold communion with the distant and the ideal and the fair, the better things, the sweeter possibilities, and bring them into his presence, and incorporate them with the dry and narrow actualities of his condition?

Another of these windows is hope, — and sad for us when that gets closed. The present is not enough for anybody. It is one of the great endowments of the human soul that it is always too large for its position, that it never finds its perfect repose and satisfaction just here and now, but is empowered to anticipate and appropriate a better futurity. The natural attitude of the human soul is an expectant one. A better time coming is an inheritance of which the most miserable cannot be despoiled, and which the most favored have need of. The healthy heart feels that it has not yet learned to enjoy its blessings to the full, nor yet received the best blessings

that are meant for it. Youth looks onward to the successes it is to win, the ties it is to form, its future acquisitions of knowledge, of affection, of honor or of wealth or usefulness; and when these hopes fade away, either in fulfillment or disappointment, others succeed them; and when the whole procession is closed and earth and time can offer no more, the poor wayfarer can at least sit down at that window, looking off into the calm twilight of the west and indulge its soothing anticipations of a deeper repose. As long as there is life, we say, there is hope; and the reverse of that saying is still truer and better, — as long as there is hope there is life. We can bear a disappointment if a new hope will but spring up in the place of the old one. We can bear adversity so long as there is hope of deliverance. We can suffer patiently in the expectation of a relief and a soothing to come. We can let the sun go down in darkness as long as we can turn and wait for its rising again in the east. We can bear to live in the narrow chamber of earthly circumstances; ill-furnished and cold it may be, and the doors all barred, with only a prison fare on the board, and the naked walls to look at, if only that window is wide open and can look out towards some far Jerusalem of our desires and let in the light and air and warmth, coming thence to refresh and sustain us.

Lastly, there is the window of religious faith. That looks towards the New Jerusalem. It opens towards the heavens; it is the broad sky-light of

our earthly house. This world, with all its possessions and its hopes, is but a poor and close residence of the soul without the expectation of another and a better. All the other windows, looking into scenes however beautiful, will get closed at last, and the light will darken over every brightest landscape, and we must have light from above, or be dark indeed. We must open, and keep open, that window in the roof, through that catch the heavenly airs, and light that never fadeth; through that look up from our earthly chambers, darkened with pain and grief, and made lonesome by bereavements, and chilled by disappointments, and all the fair pictures that have hung upon their walls swept away, and the floor hard and rough; look up into the heavenly city and see its golden pavements, and its gates of pearl, and its walls of jasper, and its seven lamps burning before the throne, and catch the notes of its sweet music, and witness the joys of the redeemed, and loving ones reunited after parting, and dwelling together in those happy mansions with God and the Lamb, where is no more hunger nor thirst, nor pain, nor tears; and there is no need of the sun, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and the gates of it shall not be shut by day, and there shall be no night there.

Keep that window open, and the angels shall descend through it on their invisible wings, and people your hard, earthly lot with their comforting presences, and sing their songs to you in your

loneliness, and lighten all your burdens, and comfort all your griefs. Keep that window open, and it is as though the roof of your hard, earthly condition were lifted up, and you already dwelt in the skies, and sat down at the great feast.

Keep all these windows open, looking towards one and another of the fair Jerusalems of thought and love and faith. And let us not lose the practical lesson of our subject amid the mazes of metaphor which our text has involved us in. Keep alive and active the great faculties of memory and sympathy and imagination and hope and faith. Let them do their great work for us, and it matters little what our earthly lot is. We have then all nature and truth and beauty, — the past, the future, God and heaven, present with us for our own. No matter, then, what or where the chamber is that we live in, its open windows give us everything, and the four walls, that will look so narrow and confining, spread apart to our inner eye till they comprehend the universe. Then, if we prosper, we shall not become worldly and sordid; if we suffer we shall not be disheartened; if we rejoice we shall not be frivolous nor selfish; and if we are loving we shall love the beautiful and the good; if we are stinted in our fare, we have meat to eat which others know not of; if we are sick, we still breathe the airs of spiritual health; if we are lonely, we have still myriads of fair faces smiling upon us; if we die, there is a convoy of angels awaiting us, to bear us up to the realms of truer life.

Keep open the windows. From every home-sick and oppressive Babylon look out towards some fair and dear Jerusalem, — forth from the bitter Euphrates to some sweet Jordan; from every Assyrian bondage to some free and happy Canaan. And when all the others must be closed at last, there is yet that one, opening the widest, opening upon the fairest scenes of all, upon the New Jerusalem.

1860.

XIV.

OH, THAT I KNEW!

Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! — *Job* xxiii. 3.

THE afflicted patriarch, overwhelmed with calamity, in poverty and loneliness and disease, bereft of every earthly good that man holds dear, had surely enough to bear. But besides all this he is goaded to madness by his officious friends, who tell him he must have brought it all upon himself by his sins, for which God is punishing him. This he vehemently denies. This accusation is too much for his patience; he cannot sit still under it; he wants to appeal directly to God; carry his case before Him, and get himself vindicated from the stinging charge. But how get his case before that tribunal? Where is that Great Judge? How come to Him and be heard and justified? There is deepest pathos, as well as bitter agony, in that eager, pleading, baffled cry: "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" He stretches out his trembling, emaciated hands, gropingly, if haply he may feel after Him and find Him. He turns his eye-balls, dim with tears, and strained with looking, up to the clouds, if so he may catch some glimpse of the

majestic presence enthroned there. He calls out in the piteous tones of a lost child crying for its mother, — such tones as he would think, any one would think, must bring an answering word, even from the dumb rocks and hills, much more from the all-pitying Father. But no, it is all in vain. No vision, no touch, no voice comes in answer, He falls back into his ashes and his darkness, ready to despair, saying, "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him." And so the poor sufferer must suffer on. The hearing must be postponed; he must bide his time. Jehovah will not come at his call, to vindicate his character, or put an end to his woes. It is a severe denial; there is almost cruelty in it, but he must bear it, with only such comfort as he can find in his consciousness of rectitude, and only such patience as he could derive from his own strength, aided only by such confidence as he may feel in the invisible help and support of God. He cannot find God in any such sense or degree as his oppressed and grieving heart yearns for. He must suffer on, and he will, with as brave a heart as a man may, only there will keep breaking out, or breathing out, with every sigh of grief, and every groan of misery, a longing, plaintive cry, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!"

We have here, in this good man's cry, so long-

ing, so pathetic, so ineffectual, the type of a very common spiritual experience among men, always and everywhere. I believe that among those who have sufficient spiritual life to think or care anything about the subject, it is a common matter of wonder and regret that spiritual realities and religious truths are not made more palpable to the human mind, more certain, more assured and unquestionable matter of fact, like the material world, and the facts of nature, and the present life. Since a preëminent importance is everywhere attached to these spiritual realities, why are they left liable to such anxious doubts? Why such dim perceptions of them, so that the mind does not grasp them with a definite and steady hold, and they may even fade out into a transient, and sometimes even a permanent unreality? Why are they left open to downright denial? Why should it be that even when the understanding accepts them the heart may yet fail to feel with any distinctness or constancy their actuality and their influence? Or when the heart does instinctively turn to them and accept them, the understanding interposes its difficulties and brings in distrust? And even when the understanding and the heart consent together, the resulting faith is more or less vague, fitful, and liable to eclipses, not equal to sight and handling, when, judging by the soul's needs and cravings, it should be *more* than equal to sight or handling. We are ready to say that if the truths of religion are more momentous than any others, they ought to

be more imperatively recognizable, and more indisputably established than any others; and some perhaps are led to say, seeing they are left so vague, invisible, questionable, "Away with them, let us not dream any more about them, seeing at best it is but a dream."

And even those most piously inclined, and most tenacious of their faith, do often long for more clearness, more positiveness, so that it might not grow dim, unsubstantial, or even utterly fade away, as it sometimes will, in the soul's pressing straights.

Sometimes, when we feel utterly weak and prostrate, and want religious strength; when we are overwhelmed with affliction, and need the comforts of religion, and need to have them solid, sure, and all-brightening; when this world's blessings and supports seem to fall utterly away from us, and we need to feel that another world is a sure possession, better than this, and palpable, and close to us; under such experiences we, too, are ready to cry out: "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" Oh, why does He not reveal his presence unmistakably? Why should I not be permitted to see Him sitting there in his glorious heavens, and turning a kindly eye upon me his suffering child? Why does He not write his name upon the firmament, for me to read it and know that He wrote it? Why does He not speak to me, breathing gracious words into the ear of my heart, that I may know his voice as unerringly as I know my mother's, or my best friend's?

Why should I not feel his very hand held out to me and grasping my own? Why should I not see that infinite love as I would see it, and as alone it can satisfy me to see it, shining in the benignity of a veritable countenance turned upon me?

And then, again, why should I not be permitted to look into that fair world which I am taught that I shall enter upon when this body is cast off? Oh, that the heavens would open to me, that I might see the angels and the just made perfect, gathered there in their shining robes, and rejoicing in a deathless life, and beckoning me up to join their sweet company! Why may I not be permitted to see the glorified spirits ascending and descending on the heavenly ladders, and at least to look upon and listen to the glad festivities of that marriage supper of the Lamb? If indeed my Maker is disposed to give me perfect comfort amid my many sorrows, perfect support under my heavy burdens, and strength to do all my work, why not show me these things in open, unchanging vision, in absolute knowledge. Himself, his heaven, his love, and all the glories and felicities of that supernal kingdom for which He has destined me. I should murmur no more, faint no more, and weep no more. Oh, that I might see and know all now! Oh, that the silence of eternity may be broken, and the great dome that arches over the spiritual universe part asunder to my weary, aching eyes!

But there is no answer to our cry. The stars

keep shining, the winds whispering, but all inarticulate. The cloud-drapery of the sky keeps on folding and spreading itself; but if they clothe they also hide the person of God. If the heavenly choirs are singing their joyous chants, our ears are holden that we should not hear them. Though we plead for the sights and sounds of the heavenly spheres, no glimpse is afforded us, and the everlasting silence reigns unbroken. Though we should wear away the stones with our bended knees in the importunity of prayer, no answer comes to eye or ear, and we are left to grope on as we can, so wearily, so darkly, with only such poor dim faith as we can attain to from out of the reasonings of the understanding, or the intuitions of the heart.

Why should this be so? Why is that truth kept back from us when we need it so much? Is not God too reticent for a God of love? Or is it that we refuse or neglect to avail ourselves of such means of knowledge as we possess, and are blind because we will not see, and deaf because we will not listen, and are left ignorant and doubting through an evil heart of unbelief?

I know it is the usual and conventional way of the pulpit to lay all the blame of this dimness and halting of faith upon man. And no doubt he often, through his own fault, comes short in some degree of the positiveness of conviction which he might have, and that he himself does much to darken the glass through which spiritual things are to be seen. But still let us try to be just to man as well as to God.

For my part, I believe that the Creator never intended that we should know spiritual facts concerning Himself and the future state with the same distinctness with which we know the material facts of this world. He has purposely drawn a veil over them, not to conceal them wholly, but to make them less palpable. It is by his appointment that we have to see them as through a glass darkly, dimly, — but glimpses and intimations rather than a distinct vision, through our hopes rather than through proofs. And so far from this appointment detracting from his wisdom and goodness, I think it illustrates both. It is best as it is. We know by many proofs that this world is intended to be a place of discipline for man, so arranged with reference to him as to make it not as comfortable and as pleasant as possible, but to train his faculties, and develop his strength by a vigorous discipline, — vigorous even to the point of pain and severity. We can conceive that the spiritual world might have been made so manifest to us now as to take away all the disciplinary character of the present world, and this life cease to be hard enough to do its office in educating us to manliness and virtue. God provides against this failure by veiling that future world.

It is intended that while we live in this world we should do its work, take an interest in its affairs, study its lessons, love what is beautiful and good in it, and learn to bear what is hard in it, conform to its natural laws. And if this is the

plan, then of course another world far more glorious which we are to enter hereafter and very soon, would not be set right before us, wide open and plainly visible. That would defeat the plan; it would distract us from the present scene, fill us with excited expectation, make us too impatient to be gone from here, or else too patient in staying, knowing we shall go so soon. We should be unfitted for our work here and our enjoyments. This fine garden of the world would not be duly tilled, and they who are set to till it with severe toil would become idlers and weaklings, as those children are apt to be who are born to brilliant expectations in life, assured of fortune and all worldly blessings without an effort. No, let that life be veiled as it is, so that we may do our part in this heartily.

But, then, would it not be well that in bearing the hardships and griefs of this world we should have the supports and consolations derived from the sight of the future world? No, it would not be well, as far as we can see. Hopes, anticipations of that world it is desirable to have, and those we do have; but vision, knowledge, distinct and assured? No, it would not be well. We should lose the discipline of life; our sorrows would be too easily comforted, pain would too nearly cease to be pain; the world would not be the school of patience and perseverance which it is, and is meant to be. The vigor of manliness would cease out of life; there would be no robust characters formed. The graces of humility and

resignation, and meek submission, and pious trust would be wanting; all heroism would disappear; martyrdom would lose its crown, and self-sacrifice be dispossessed of its nobleness, and the human soul everywhere flat out into the mere nerveless ecstasy of idle and fruitless contemplation. Those persons who, here and there, have attained to an extraordinary, abnormal state of spiritual convictions, and who have thought that they have seen God and Christ, and the angels and all the heavenly realities, palpable about and around them, — they have not been good specimens of humanity; they have not done their work well in the world. Sometimes they have despised this fair creation; sometimes they have lived in perpetual, unhealthy excitement; sometimes in useless, morbid dreaming; sometimes eager to get out of the world, and sometimes living in it as if they were already transferred to another. They have neglected their bodies, their minds have grown weak, they have scorned the every-day work of life, and been poor exemplars of manly duty and endurance. It is against nature, and against God's plan for one to see and know, or to think that he sees and knows, the things of God and of eternity as palpably as the things of humanity and of time. Doubtless it would be very pleasant; but mere pleasantness is not the thing. Life, action, duty, manliness, patience, trustfulness, — these are the fruits that the Creator would reap and gather from the fields of this world; therefore He lets down the veil to hide the next world.

We do not seek to initiate our children in their early days into all the mysteries, labors, cares, passions, and trials of mature life. We know it is the worst thing we could do for them. Rather we let them have their child-world to themselves; we respect and cherish their ignorance as their best defense and happiest nurture. They get glimpses of what is coming, but full vision of it? — God forbid. And just so God treats us in respect to the future world, — keeps us children in reference to it, and we can see that He is very wise in this matter.

And yet, while the facts of the spiritual world are thus shrouded in mystery and screened from our sight in order that they may not take such exclusive hold of our imaginations and our thoughts as to unfit us for the work and deprive us of the discipline of the present world, at the same time provision is made for faith. God has been careful to keep faith alive and glowing in the hearts of his children. We are not left without witnesses of eternal things. Positive and distinct knowledge would not be good for us, and is withholden; but faith, a certain hopeful, confiding anticipation of those realities, a seeing of them, as it were, through a glass, darkly, — such faith elevates, strengthens, consoles, and it is provided for in our constitution and in the revelations and dealings of God. It is in some sense innate in man; that is, the heart feels certain natural desires and yearnings and forelookings that of themselves kindle into faith. And then

there is the supporting testimony of the best and holiest souls in all time, showing us that the expectation of another world, though veiled from sight, has been to them a trust, a stay, and a joy. And those dear truths relating to things beyond the grave are spoken in divine accents from the lips of Jesus Christ. Through his inspired and inspiring words they breathe themselves softly and sweetly into all hearts that listened to Him trustfully; they proclaim themselves more majestically, more touchingly, from amid the agonies of his cross; they bring life and immortality to light more distinctly from out of the darkness of his forsaken grave; they shine out from amid the clouds that received his ascending form. Yes, there is a revelation, glorious, precious, yet not too clear, — through a glass, darkly. In healthy and well-balanced souls it adjusts itself with different degrees of distinctness to the soul's wants and best interests. It goes by a graduated scale. In youth the idea of a spiritual world beyond death is not apt to be very vivid. Though the mind at that period may be free from skepticism, devout in its habits, piously inclined, yet it does not turn very intently towards death and a life beyond death, and it was never meant to do so. Care is taken in the providential plan that it should not. The young have the lessons of this world to learn, and its work to prepare for, its experiences to deal with. It is required that their sense, thought, feeling, be given to the things of the world they are placed in. It would be un-

natural and unhealthy that they should clearly see and realize, and be occupied in contemplating the realities of another world. Therefore we need not mourn that they seem insensible to those things. God would have it so, has made them so; this world first, the next in due time. Through a glass, darkly, for awhile. Complain not of the glass. God's hand places it there.

And it is much the same in middle and active life. Duty lies here, and the present scene must be the only visible one. Faith casts its glances beyond the line, but glances only, — no distinct, continuous vision. It is not permitted; it is not best. We have seen why. Our eyes must be upon our work; we must be trained to diligence, fidelity, and patience, without having our reward fully in view, for that would make us selfish in our best things, and perhaps distract the mind altogether from its duty. We must walk by faith and not by sight, — live a man's life worthily in this world, whether there be any other world or not. It is better to trust and not to know.

But then, as we go on in life, times and circumstances arise that tend to brighten that faith into clearer perception. Through a glass, still, but not so darkly. We know how it is that to a heart which retains its natural reverence and piety, in time of sickness and bodily decay the idea of another life presses itself home, claims more of the thoughts, enlists the feelings, grows more real. In times of adversity and disaster, such a heart begins to think, amid the wreck of

things here, what there is hereafter to look forward to and depend upon. When our dear ones are taken from us, one by one, and we are left alone, amid the darkness of earth, the stars of immortality appear, glimmer after glimmer. Through the deep solitudes of this weary and stormy life, we love to think of the promised reunions of heaven; and anticipation grows vivid, and the meaning of Christ's revealing words opens itself more and more.

And then, sometimes, — when death is close at hand, and the departing one has nothing more to do with this world, or to bear in it, and it will do him no harm to have another world opened to him, — sometimes it seems as if God then lifted the veil entirely, and took away the darkening glass, that the soul while yet in the flesh, though just leaving it, may catch a view of its inheritance close at hand. What mean these visions that seem sometimes vouchsafed to the dying. I knew a woman the other day, and one little given, I should think, to any visions of spiritual fancy who in the last hour, when her breath grew faint, and her eyes dim to earthly objects, exclaimed, as her countenance kindled with an almost celestial radiance, "Oh, I see the angels; I am going!" And I knew of another who, in like manner, when the struggle was just closing, and she had given her hand in parting benediction to one and another of her dear ones, and her hour had come, said, "I see the door open, open wide; let me go in, — farewell;" and she went in. Such

beautiful experiences we have related to us from thousands of death-beds. We hardly know how much they mean. We can build no positive conclusions upon them. For us who remain they can only minister to our faith, but give us no knowledge. But it does seem as if the good God delighted to show Himself and his heaven to his children as soon as it would do, willing to disclose the blessed secret even to a fleshly eye in those last moments, to brighten up the dark valley which must be passed through, and give a conscious victory over the king of terrors and the night of the grave. For it is no harm then, when there is no more work to do, nor trial to bear. And it gives a gracious, kindly, comforting renewal of faith to those who stand by, — faith, but not knowledge; it is only knowledge to those who take it at first hand. Knowledge is not for the living, but only for the dying. Not for those who are to stay in this world, but for those who have left it, or are taking their last step out of it.

I know not, friends, whether I ought to close such a discourse as this with an exhortation to cultivate and seek a more vivid faith in spiritual realities, or with an exhortation to be contented and patient in working on, and suffering on, with such a dim and halting faith as is vouchsafed to us. I must do both. Listen reverently to the great intimations of the heart as it breathes its spiritual hopes in its highest moments, in its highest words of love and confidence. Listen to the dear assurances of the Saviour, and take in as

largely as you can that spirit of assured anticipation which He carried to his cross and to his grave, and up out of his grave. Cultivate a believing spirit; have your conversation in heaven, and though you must look through a glass dimly, yet look, for there is some light, and it is meant for you, to uplift you and comfort you.

And yet repine not that you can see but darkly, — transient, uncertain flashes, and not the broad daylight of the heavenly sunshine. Judge not too harshly your own doubts or other people's. Do not covet that kind of faith which is no faith, but sight, which God does not think it good for us to have yet. Bear patiently the discipline of uncertainty. Wait meekly for the uplifting of the veil. Keep the heart reverent, pure, dutiful, trustful, and God will show himself to you, and the brightness of his heaven, more and more, little by little, as you need it and can bear it. Obey Him and ye shall know Him. Trust Him and He will seem to come nearer, and He shall make good in due time his own promise, "And ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your hearts."

1862.

XV.

THE ONE FOUNDATION.

Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. — 1 *Corinthians* iii. 2.

I DO not know that we can give our thoughts a more appropriate direction at this season of the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ than in considering this declaration of the Apostle, — how true it was when he made it, how true it has been ever since, and how true it is likely to continue in the indefinite future.

His declaration was to the effect that whatever theological speculation men might indulge in, whatever ritual they might adopt, whatever church institutions they might organize, He, Jesus Christ, was, and was to continue, the head, the centre, the Master, Lord, King, Captain, or whatever other title or metaphor He might use to illustrate his supremacy in religion, his spiritual leadership and authority. Men might build their superstructures variously, but there was only one foundation for them all.

It was a bold saying enough when Paul uttered it. It had not much visible support. There were but few Christians in the world, and they were not of much account socially and politically.

The Roman senate, the philosophers of Athens, the College of Augury, the priesthood of the old religions, would have laughed Paul to scorn had he spoken thus in their presence.

But his words were already coming true, and a complete fulfillment of them was hastening on. Soon the new religion got possession of the Roman world, — its throne, its temples, and its people. The mighty fabric of the Catholic church arose. It covered the civilized world. It embraced all Christians in its fold. It was very un-Christlike in many of its aspects and doings, but it did claim Him for its foundation, — was faithful, however erring, in its allegiance to Him. Nay, they held in those times, that to go out of that church was to go out of the pale of the gospel, away from Christ, and become heretic and heathen, and that absolute church unity was essential to Christ's kingdom on earth. To break that unity would be to dethrone and reject Him.

But the centuries rolled on. The old church became corrupt and tyrannical. The human mind revolted against its oppressions and monstrous assumptions. The Protestant Reformation came. The Church was split and rent. Large populations, whole kingdoms, went off and founded new churches, antagonistic to the old one, new creeds, new forms, everything new except the foundation, — they acknowledged and claimed Christ for that, as earnestly, as devotedly as the old one. The eternal unity of the religion was gone forever; but Jesus Christ was held to as loyally, as

strenuously as ever, as the head over all. Sixteen centuries had passed, and He was still supreme. Three more centuries have passed. A great diversity of sects and doctrines has arisen, clashing much with one another, but professing, and really striving, to build on Him, and be true to Him, steadfastly adhering to Him. So much is secure. The Man of Nazareth is sure of eighteen centuries, at least. So long He has been the central figure in history, unapproached and almost unchallenged in his spiritual headship.

But how is it now, and how is it to be in the future? It seems to many as if the time was coming, and already far advanced, when the brave assertion of the Apostle, in the text, is to be exposed to severer tests than it has ever known before. They think they see coming on a state of intellectual chaos and spiritual anarchy, which threatens to engulf the authority and headship, if not the very name and memory of Jesus Christ, — not only to sweep away the old superstructure of religious beliefs and observances, but to plow up the foundation itself, and remove Christ himself from his place as the head of the corner. There is active skepticism abroad, — such an all-daring spirit of inquiry, dealing in the fiercest manner with things that it used to respect and let alone. Everything is questioned nowadays. The Bible is questioned in all its books and chapters, as fearlessly as any other book. Its correctness in the statements of his-

torical and scientific fact is questioned. Inspiration is questioned. The miracles are questioned. The speculative doctrines, which Christians have held for centuries, and thought they could prove from the Bible, are more than questioned. Church observances, and the obligations of the Sabbath are questioned. Nothing can escape this searching spirit, and its inexorable movement, — or is sacred against its profane intrusion and destructive encroachments.

And if this movement is to go on, as it is going, with ever bolder tread and a wider sweep, and nothing to check it, what can stand against it? men ask, — What will be left of Christianity? and when that is gone what place is left for Jesus Christ in the believing and affectionate regards of mankind? The whole Christian system being thus undermined and shaken, its authority, its records, its evidences, its doctrinal body, and its church organization, — the system being discarded, no place will be left for its founder, who will thus be proved to have founded nothing that can stand, — He must cease to be the world's religious head. Why keep the foundation if we tear down everything that has been built on it? Such are the fears of the devout conservatism of the age. And there is some ground for those fears, it must be owned, and yet more ground for confidence and good courage.

The movement that is complained of will undoubtedly go on. Nothing can stop that. It is the intellectual drift of the age, inevitable, irre-

sistible, as yonder ocean tide. A merciless criticism will continue to sift all historical documents, in the Bible as elsewhere, as to their contents and their authorship, and no reverent regard for things established, things ancient, or things sacred will hinder it. It will bring, is bringing, and claims the right to bring, all religious doctrines to the test of reason and the moral sense, and will suffer nothing to stand that is irreconcilable with these. It will not suffer any act, purpose, or plan to be ascribed to God, or have any authority whatever, if it be at variance with the sense of right and the humane sentiments in the human soul. The intelligent mind of the age is borne along in this direction, in some persons consciously and exultingly, in some unconsciously, and in some reluctantly and with anxious resistance, but inevitably for all. We can no more effectually resist this general mental drift, or fail to share it, than we can the movement of our solar system, which the astronomers tell us of, towards the constellation Hercules. We are carried along with it, protest and struggle and hold back as we may.

This movement, I say, will surely go on, and must, whatever may be the consequences. But, for my part, I do not in the least apprehend that those consequences will be disastrous to religion, or will tend to dis-crown Jesus Christ as spiritual king in the world. There are several reasons for this confidence.

In the first place, if Jesus Christ was what we

take Him for, a true Son of God, endowed, inspired, sent to teach and inspire true religion, we must infer that He cannot be displaced or defeated, but must permanently triumph, through the omnipotence of God and the truth. We may adopt the strong metaphor which Jesus himself used: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, and on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder."

In the second place, it is to be observed that the leaders in this movement, that is to say, nearly all the most eminent thinkers and writers in literature, philosophy, and religion, are not hostile in spirit to Jesus Christ, — do not wish to diminish his influence. They are mostly serious and earnest, if not devout men. They are not scoffers. They profess the highest appreciation of Christ, and regard themselves as promoting his true cause, his real and legitimate influence. The spirit which actuates them, as a general thing, is not hostile to religion, or to Christ as its highest representative.

In the third place, and this is the final and most important consideration, there is no tendency in the rationalizing and freely-inquiring movement of this age to undermine Christianity, or to supersede Christ's spiritual headship; on the contrary, I believe that it will be found to strengthen Christianity by purifying it, and to establish Christ more firmly in his spiritual empire, by showing what his claims really are, and what He actually was in spirit and intent.

It is true that since the intelligent mind of the world has determined to study out its religion, and the grounds of it, and bring it in all its parts and adjuncts to the test of reason and conscience, many old ideas that have got connected with the religion are in imminent danger, and have been already rejected by many, and essentially modified by greater numbers, and are in general in a shattered and fading condition; but none, I think, that are in any degree vital to the real religion of Christ.

For one thing, under this progress of reason, the position of the Bible, as a book, is undergoing great modifications. It used to be held, and to some extent it is still held, that the Bible was written or dictated, in all its language, all its ideas, and in all its statements of fact, by God himself, and must therefore be infallibly correct in every particular, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. For long ages hardly a man arose to question that it was so. But at length, human reason waking up and moving in all directions, moved in this also, and began to ask what ground there was for this view of the Bible, and found that there was no ground for it at all, — that it was pure assumption. Then it said, let us study and sift this book as we do any other, — reverently, for it deals with great subjects, yet freely, for freedom is the reason's birthright.

And the result of the sifting is, thus far, the discovery of some errors of science in some of

the books, some errors in statements of facts, some discrepancies of statement, some ideas that an advanced philosophy cannot accept, and some sentiments not now acceptable to a tender conscience and a pure heart.

All this does not impair the value of the Bible; all that is vitally true in it remains perfectly untouched and forever unassailable, and what is false in it was never of any value. The old idea of a literal inspiration in the writings being exploded, there is no longer the necessity which weighed so heavily on former generations, of vindicating the book of Genesis against the science of geology, or of imprisoning a Galileo to establish the astronomy of the Book of Judges, or to apologize for the Apostles, because they mixed some of their native Judaism with the purer truth they derived from their Master.

And then this free examination of the Bible has brought out to light great stores of its hidden wisdom and beauty. There is a deeper appreciation of the wealth and worth of the Bible now than there was in the times when men dared not touch it or look at it in the light of reason. And no free dealing with the Bible has manifested any tendency or any power to mar the moral image, or dim the spiritual glory of Jesus Christ as there represented; but rather to make that image and that glory more visible and more shining. The more it has become apparent that the Bible is not inspired, in the old sense, the more manifest it has become that Jesus Christ was in-

spired, in the most spiritual sense, — inspired to discern and feel and know and love and exemplify all things true and good, and heavenly and divine. The Bible is a debtor to the reason, and has been a gainer from its boldest researches.

Again, the progress of reason is very damaging to the systems of theology that have so long usurped the name and semblance of Christ's religion. Those old doctrines of the creeds have been the puzzle and the terror of mankind for ages. But they are losing their hold. They are still extant, but those who retain them have to qualify and soften them in enlightened communities, trying to make them accordant with reason; for even they have to recognize the supremacy of reason. It is not enough now to quote some texts in support of them, for it is known now that just as many texts, and as good, can be quoted on the other side, — indeed, that a case can be made for or against any doctrine, by a careful selection of texts. Besides, texts and doctrines alike are held amenable now to good sense, right reason, and the sense of equity and goodness in the human breast, in the light of which all texts must be explained, and all doctrines accepted or rejected. Accordingly the old creeds, Athanasian, Arian, and Nicene, confessions of Augsburg, of Geneva, of Westminster, Catholic, Protestant, and Anglican, are losing their importance, rejected by many, modified by more, fading, dissolving, receding, and destined to disappear, first in substance, then in form, and lastly in name and profession.

But what is loss to creeds and systems and sects is gain to Christ. The reason, conscience, and heart find nothing in Him to object to or renounce, but everything to believe and love and cleave to. The theological obscurations, and doctrinal impediments, being removed, the mind gets nearer to Him, understands Him better. He stands out more clearly to view in the simplicity and beauty, the power, the truth, and divinity of his teachings, life, and spirit.

The liberal, rational spirit of the age tends to weaken men's belief in the miraculous facts connected with Christianity. And this is to many minds a most alarming tendency. The tendency is not to be denied. It has been going on very observably for two or three hundred years. Before that, miracles were everywhere accepted, and constantly expected as almost a matter of course. No more evidence was required to establish them than any other facts. The human mind was predisposed to believe in them. But as science advanced, and the laws of nature became more known, and their uniformity observed, the mind began to reluct at alleged exceptions, and to scrutinize the evidence for them, — to reject all but the best proved, and even to feel incredulous about those.

The phenomena of magic and witchcraft were universally believed in, and were continually manifesting themselves, until the eighteenth century. But reason, waking up, questioned them, and then discredited them, and after a long bat-

tle, with innumerable hangings and burnings, has finally put them all out of the range of human belief, and they have ceased.

The miracles of the Catholic Church, which were in full and frequent occurrence, and nowhere questioned until the Reformation, or later, have now ceased to recur. The human mind was not in a mood to believe or expect them any longer, to hold them credible, whatever the testimony for them. And they only appear now in the most benighted quarters. Intelligent Catholics even, I believe, pay no heed to them.

There remained the miraculous narratives of the New Testament; but even these are at length called in question. And hence much anxiety and alarm on the part of those who have been accustomed to regard miraculous testimony as essential to the acceptance of the Christian religion.

The alarm, I think, is groundless. For, in the first place, the miracles still stand in the gospel narratives. They have not been disproved, and cannot be. None of the evidence for them has been invalidated. And the boldest of critics has not yet shown, satisfactorily, nor even plausibly, how they may be eliminated from the rest of the narrative. And in the second place, if the deniers did succeed in eliminating them, they would not thereby impair the true and everlasting grounds of Christian faith.

If you value the miracles, as such, if you rely upon them in any degree as proofs, and see no incredibility about them, very well; there they

are, — they cannot be taken from you. If, on the contrary, you so far share the rationalistic spirit of the age that the miracles, as such, are to you a stumbling-block, and a hindrance to faith, — very well, then reject them, if you see any way of doing it satisfactorily to yourself, and if not, disregard them ; pass by them, and concern yourself with only the more spiritual and vital parts of the gospel, where its essence lies, and which are just the same with or without the miracles. Let every mind freely follow its own bent in this matter, and fear no damage to religion, in itself or in the world. The miracles are not the principal evidence of Christianity, however real and true they may be. If you believe Christ himself, his words of truth, — if He inspire you with his own faith and spirit, his assurance of immortality, his love of God, and of man, his pious trust, his devotion to the right and the good, so that you apprehend and revere and love Him, and your soul accepts Him as its spiritual leader and Lord, — then your faith is complete ; miracles, if you accept them, will not help it very much ; or if you reluct at them, and ignore them, your faith remains unshaken and entire. And if you have not such faith confirmed in your own soul, miracles, however fully you may believe, will not give it to you.

Unmistakably, it is the tendency of the educated mind of our period, not by the force of new arguments, but by an inevitable mental drift, to reluct more and more incredulously from every-

thing miraculous. And the questioning and controversy on the subject will have, and has already, this one good effect, — to turn men's minds to Christ himself, what He was in his character and heart, and to those responsive oracles in the soul which are the surest, the unanswerable, unimpeachable testimony to his truth and lordship. Good, pious men believe the miracles, and good, pious men disbelieve them, — and will both continue pious, and loyal to Christ, however the question of miracles may be settled, or whether it is ever settled or not.

The true and unassailable faith is a sympathy with the mind and life of Christ, and that is the same with or without the miracles. When your own inmost soul says of Christ's teachings, "I feel and know they must be true," — and of his traits, "I feel they are noble, beautiful, and divine, and I love them," — and of his feelings, "All that is best in me feels so too," — that is Christian faith, and nothing else is, and doctrines and creeds and observances and miracles are but a poor substitute for it.

Such are the various doings and results, actual and prospective, of this free-thinking, free-searching spirit of the times. It is very powerful, and perfectly irresistible. It has been plowing a deep furrow across the world, and will go on to plow it deeper. Fear it not. It will disperse many errors and superstitions, break up old theologies, lay hands on some things that are dear to pious hearts, disturb some comfortable mental habits.

But fear not. It cannot shake or dim a single truth. It cannot touch Jesus Christ, or a single lineament of his spiritual countenance. It will tear away the theological and ritual swathings and wrappages that have hidden Him from sight, and reveal his true personality, more lustrous and divine than ever before. There has been a deal of doctrinal and ritual rubbish to be cleared away before men could see the true Christ in his glorious divinity and beautiful simplicity of soul. It is in process of being cleared away, thank God! When it shall come to be more fully and widely seen that religion consists in love to God and man, in justice, kindness, purity, trust, and hope, — all unselfish affections and virtuous principles and pious aspirings, — then Christ will be appreciated, and receive for the first time the full homage that is his due, and be worthily crowned on earth; then his kingdom will have come. And the free mental movement of the age, though often destructive in its immediate effects, and sometimes proud and irreverent in spirit, is unconsciously helping to bring it in.

I think Paul's prophecy in the text holds good hitherto, and is likely to hold good for indefinite periods to come. Depend upon it, that foundation will stand as long as there are souls that love truth, and love goodness, and seek to obey, and love to trust God, and to do good among men, and to keep the heart pure, and the life blameless, and in weakness, short-coming, and sin to repose in the divine mercy and aspire to

a better and immortal life hereafter; so long Christ will have true disciples, who will delight to cherish his memory, to hail Him Master, Lord, and King.

And as this, his birthtime celebration returns from year to year through the future centuries, in a more enlightened world, his name will be more truly honored, his religion more deeply believed, his person more reverently loved, his empire more cordially recognized, and his divinity more clearly manifested.

1865.

XVI.

THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS.

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. — 1 *Cor.* i. 23, 24.

IN undertaking to establish and spread the Christian religion, Paul was obliged to set forth as the highest man, the representative and model man, the embodiment of truth and the type of the highest excellence and beauty, a man who had been crucified, a sorrowing and suffering man, a disgraced and defeated man. This necessity seemed to place the Apostle at a great disadvantage. Could mankind accept as their divinest man one who had lived and died so? One whose prominent symbol was a cross, expressive of all humiliation and misery; a symbol that never could be put out of sight, that would forever be associated with his memory! Such a man to be the head and impersonation of the world's religion?

Paul felt the difficulty, and he states it in the text. Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, an obstacle to their faith in Him. It offered to them, as the highest man, the Messiah,

as they would call their highest man, the exact opposite of what they thought he should be. In order to be accepted as their Messiah, he must be splendid, powerful, triumphant; a mighty deliverer of his people from foreign domination; he must be regal, like Solomon; long-lived, perhaps not subject to death at all; a righteous ruler and brilliant conqueror. But here they had presented to them just the opposite of all this, — a poor, homeless, sorrow-stricken man who had died, and died young, and died ignominiously. Of course they turned away with horror and disgust from such a man offered them as the Messiah. To ask them to acknowledge Him was to insult them.

And the claims of Christ could not be expected to fare much better with the Greeks, who were the other principal element of society there and then. The Greeks represented the highest intellectual culture in philosophy, letters, and the arts of that period. And a man to be accepted by them as the foremost man and head of humanity, must command their intellectual homage: he must be a philosopher above all their philosophers, outshining in wisdom their Plato and Aristotle, and unfold to them the mysteries of creation, the origin of things, the destinies of the world, the essence of matter and of mind, the sum of all human wisdom. And beyond all this, he must be strong and beautiful, a living and moving Apollo come down among men, — for the Greeks worshiped physical strength and beauty,

and abhorred weakness and deformity, — and must excel in the games, and distance all competitors; he must be an orator above Pericles; a warrior that could scatter Persian hosts like a mist; a poet that could take the crown from Homer, from Pindar, and from Æschylus. He must be serene in dignity as Jove, as indomitable as Mars, and as genial as Bacchus, and the darling of all the Muses. Nothing would pass with the Greeks that did not satisfy the æsthetical element. They could readily deify men; but they could give no man the highest place in their pantheon unless he were the strongest and most beautiful among men, a very child of genius, the embodiment of art, the model of all culture; and his life must be beautiful; he must be prosperous, happy, joyful; with all the wisdom of the schools in his brain, and all the sunshine of Greece in his heart, and all the delights of Olympus in his life.

Such a Christ as that, if Paul had had one to offer them, they would have accepted and placed his statue on the Acropolis, and built temples and altars for his worship. But he had only Jesus of Nazareth to present to them, an outcast Jew, whom even his own miserable race rejected, who throughout his sad life had not where to lay his head, and died helpless and despised, the death of a felon. No wonder it was foolishness to them, and they flouted the claim as absurd and ridiculous.

We know with what vigor and warmth Paul

combated this Jewish and Greek prejudice as to what sort of person the coming man, the spiritual leader of the world, should be. He insisted upon it that he should not be such a conquering hero or such a prosperous, happy man as they would have him; that he should be a sufferer. He never tried to evade or gloss over the ugly fact of the cross, but made it prominent, — was always bringing it forward, — gloried in it, — was not content with preaching Christ in general, but Christ crucified in particular, — held Him up as an object of revering faith, though He was crucified, and all the more because He was crucified. He seemed to attach more value to that fact than to any other fact of his biography, or any words of his mouth. So he joined issue with all the prepossessions and demands of the enlightened people of his age, and girded himself up to fight his great battle through, — of Christ against the world.

Now what shall we say of Paul's position in this matter? Shall we say that he was trying to make the best of a bad case, and that, as he could not reverse the ugly facts, he determined, like an able commander in the field, or a skillful lawyer in court, to convert the very difficulties of his position into advantages, and make them appear to be to be all on his side, and make them work in favor of his desperate cause? Or shall we say that he was right, and that it was in perfect good faith that he gloried in the cross, and that his was a deeper and truer philosophy than

that which demanded a victorious and happy Christ or foremost-man, or God-man.

Time and history and the religious experience of centuries have settled this question so conclusively in Paul's favor that it is difficult for us to put ourselves back to the apostolic age and form an independent judgment of the merits of the question.

If we could so put ourselves back, I am not sure but that, at first thought, we should side with the Jews and Greeks and against Paul. We should reluct at the idea that the best and completest man, the man of men, the Son of Man, fit to be the leader of all men, that He should be signally a sufferer, that He should come to be, as it were, the Lord of the world, and yet the world go all amiss with Him; that He should experience so few of the world's blessings and all its woes, and finally be crushed, a very martyr to his own truth and goodness. Should we not be inclined to say rather that the world shall be all tributary to the honor and happiness of the foremost and divinest man in it? That his career should be made to illustrate for all men the wisdom, the beauty, and success that attend a life of virtue and love; that all the laws of nature and all the providences of God should conspire to crown his life with all things lovely and felicitous; that such a life, in order to show forth the attributes of God, and win the admiring homage of mankind, should be visibly a beautiful, bright flowering out of all the richest juices and finest

tissues of nature, showing us the harmony between what is highest in spiritual things and what is most perfect in the order of nature; that it should be a joyous, serene, triumphant life, and without a death, — or, if there must be a death, a welcome, a transfigured, and a victorious death? If God meant to send one man into the world to be above all other men, the crown and pattern of humanity, to show us what God is, and what man may be, — to lead the procession of the ages on their march through a beautiful world to a glorious destiny, — should not nature, as it were, be his ally and his servant, and heap upon him her richest treasures and delights; deck him out with all her jewelry, and wreathe her fairest crowns about his brow? Is not that the man, who, as the object of our loving faith and homage, would be our most accepted head, our Redeemer, our religion? So said the Greeks and Jews, and so perhaps we should say if the question had been put to us before it was decided otherwise.

But we should have been in the wrong, and Paul was right. His was a deeper and truer philosophy of things, not apparent to the world's first thought, but to its second thought quite apparent. We know it now, that he was right, and that the life and death of Christ was such as they should be for the foremost man, and that God was right in appointing such a life and death to his best beloved Son.

There are two styles of a worthy and happy life: both desirable, both legitimate, each of them

designed by the Creator to diversify and adorn the human lot. One of them I may call the Greek, and the other the Christian. The Greek idea I have already described. Clothed in beauty and full of delights, it requires many fine graces and virtues to make it complete. Active intellect, quick and refined sensibilities, a kindly goodnature, a sunny and delicious childhood, hopeful and exultant youth, strong and successful manhood, a peaceful and reverend old age, — rejoicing in the golden twilight of a long, fair day. And this style of life requires, for its full development, prosperous and pleasant circumstances, a smooth path and happy surroundings, genial skies and a flowery earth, public favor and homebred delights. There is beauty and there is happiness in it, and the good God bestows it upon some in very full measure, and it would seem to please Him that there should be some of it, some glimpses, intervals of it, in all men's lives. We all desire it, and we love to witness it. It is very comely and pleasant to behold in the young, and if there be some illusions about it we would not be in too much haste to dispel them. This is the Greek idea of a happy life favored by the gods.

The Christian ideal is very different, — not incompatible with this, not excluding and denouncing this, but in another style, on another level, and requiring different circumstances. It is a life in which the grander attributes of the soul are brought out into predominance. Patience and fortitude immovable, courage and energy in-

domitable, rectitude that no power could shake, love culminating into disinterestedness and self-sacrifice, a soul mightier than the world, and triumphing over accidents of time and the terrors of death, reposing in the love of God and building its hopes on the eternal rock. Not happiness, but nobleness is the consummation of it. Not the beauty of the world, but the beauty of holiness is its supreme delight.

This is the Christian style, the Christian idea of what is highest. And this style requires for its fullest growth and perfect nurture, hardship and toil, peril, pain, and grief. It flourishes best amid the severities of life and the chastenings of God's love. And it is itself, in its own nobleness, a compensation for all the earthly joys that it misses, all the trials it endures, all the losses and crosses it has to bear. It measures life, not by the number of its visible blessings, nor by the number of its years, but by its inward riches and its deeds of duty and love. This is the highest and the fairest style.

We need only look around us, and perhaps close at home, to see that some human lives are essentially tragedies, and that there are tragic elements and periods in all lives. Pain, darkness, and often premature death, tears and blood, are a part of the human heritage. And if ever we find ourselves wondering why it should be so appointed, or so permitted, let us look to the cross and think what it signifies, and learn that it is out of such experiences that the loftiest

grandeurs and supremest beauty of the soul do proceed, and in them find their incentive, their opportunity and their test; and that without them all human life would be shallow and feeble, and man be but just one of the animal races, a little superior to his brethren in the field, yet on the same spiritual plane, and with the same destiny in prospect. The nobler traits and diviner affections by which men rank as the children of God, and become clothed upon with immortality, must needs have their birth and nurture in tragic experiences, and must pass through the fiery furnace of bitter sacrifice and deathly woe.

If ever we, too, are left to look upon the cross and all that it symbolizes as a stumbling-block and foolishness, and to think how much more fit and attractive it would have been if our Leader and embodied religion had been made one of the bright children of the morning, and his life made all beautiful through this world's felicities and charms, let us remember that this world's prosperity and beauty and joy, though they are God's gifts, — though they are meant for men, and may be sought and welcomed and gratefully enjoyed, are not the highest things, not our Maker's chief benefactions, — are not a religion nor the basis of a religion, — are of the world, worldly; good, but not best; beautiful, but not the most beautiful; not a religion; that love and duty and self-renunciation and superiority to the world, and all the vows and aspirations of an unselfish and uplooking nobleness, — that these are highest and best,

that these are religion, that the Leader and Christ must shine preëminently in these, and that these can flourish and blossom and ripen only under the shadow of a cross, and that therefore the cross is not an offense or a foolishness, but a necessity and a boon, the one true symbol of God's best love and man's highest hope and destiny.

The Apostle says that it is to them that are called that the cross, or Christ crucified, is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Them that are called, — that is, those that by any means are brought to see that there is something better than prosperity, and nobler than success, and fairer than a beautiful earthly lot, and sweeter than the pleasures of life, — they are the called. And whenever in the religious hour and in the loftier mood of the mind, when we are conscious of the mightier forces that are in us, of the more secret tendencies of our nature, of the sublime possibilities of our life; when we aspire, not merely to enjoy, but to love and to do and to be the best things, then we are called, and in such moments of glorious awakening and heavenly revelations we shall need no apostle to tell us that the cross, the symbol as it is of all the tragedies and pains and griefs of the world, is the most shining expression of the heavenly Father's love; the type of the soul's splendid opportunities, the pledge of a world beyond this world, a joy above earthly joy, and the most signal display of the wisdom of God and the power of God in his children's behalf.

Assuredly Paul was right to glory in a *crucified* Christ. And depend upon it, whatever cross has been bravely taken up and faithfully borne, — whether by Christ on Calvary, or any man anywhere, — ample compensation has been made for all its weight and torture by the good God who has appointed it to be borne.

War and famine, pestilence and poverty, all the pains and defeats of the great life-struggle, all public calamities and private heart-breaks, all the acts and scenes of the great world-tragedy, whether as concentrated here and there in a single life, or as interspersed at intervals in all lives, all are compensated, a thousand times over, in the sight of God, by the fruits of nobleness and spiritual beauty that spring from that bitter sowing, and by the light of heaven that breaks out of that thick darkness.

1867.

XVII.

SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY.

My soul thirsteth for God: for the living God. — *Psalm* xlii. 2.

THIRST is the metaphor to express an intense sense of need, the strongest possible desire. The need and desire of God is here referred to. David, who always felt it, felt it with special intensity at the moment of composing this Psalm, because he was in special trouble, weakness, and grief at the time. And all men of a living and thoughtful mind have in all times felt that desire and need, — sometimes felt it as an insatiable personal necessity of their souls, and sometimes only as an intellectual curiosity to know all that could be known of that power which lies back of nature and of the human soul; to know whether anything can be known about it, and if nothing, to know that fact. That there is such a power, very few, if any, able and influential thinkers have denied or do deny. Atheism has but a slight hold of the intellect of the world. I will leave that out of view for the present.

But what kind of a being is this supreme Power, or God? What his character and attributes?

Men want to know this. And the answer varies according to the point of view from which the question is approached.

Viewed from the side of the material universe and the laws of nature, you get one answer; viewed from the human and spiritual side, man's moral and affectional nature, another and different answer is obtained; viewed from both sides comprehensively, you get still another — a third kind of answer.

Now the philosophical historians teach us that one or the other of these two modes of approaching the question prevails at any given epoch, then there comes a change and the other mode prevails.

At present, as you well know, the material side is uppermost. God is viewed from the side of the material universe; that is, the most eminent and influential minds of the time, partly following and partly directing the mental drift of the age, are devoted to the advancement of physical science, and quite naturally are led to apply their habitual or physico-scientific methods of investigation to all subjects, and to theology amongst others.

The men who preëminently are the leaders and representatives of thought in the English-speaking world at present are such men as Spencer, Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley, — not that they are read or listened to by the masses of people, but their influence and way of thinking pervades the intellectual atmosphere, and runs down,

through whatever filtration, into the general mind around and below them.

Now these, I believe, are all as good as they are great, true and honest men, loving the truth, and pursuing it with a single eye and aim, desiring only the best welfare of mankind.

What do these men, and such as they, find God to be, approached from their physico-scientific point of view. I must speak very generally, for they doubtless differ from one another in some respects; and no one has a right to speak for them. But, in general terms, I think it safe to say of them, that they find it reasonable, perhaps necessary, to suppose that there is an infinite Power veiled behind this material universe, which may be reverently called God, and to this Being or Power they ascribe intelligence, — though without consciousness, and therefore hardly intelligence in our sense of the word, without personality, in our sense of it, without volition or choice, without affection. He or it is force, or the sum and centre of all these forces that play around us. He is law, the sum or embodiment of all these natural laws which we witness in nature. He is the principle of the order and harmony which we see in the universe. The fit worship of Him or it consists in the admiring awe and delight with which we contemplate the glorious and beautiful order of things, and we have no personal relations with Him or it, except to study and obey the laws of nature which we find in force around.

Such or such like is the God of physical science. The scientific intellect, as such, and as embodied in such men as I have named, finds no other; requires no other; and, as for desire, the scientific intellect, as such, by its very nature, has no desires, or only the desire of truth. Such is the theology that the most influential minds of the time substantially hold, and are diffusing abroad, and to which the intellect of the time is more or less consciously tending, — the theology which is shaped or led up to by a scientific habit of mind predominating, carrying all before it for the moment. It has not been always so, and it will not be always so; but by the law of alternations it is so just now.

There have been periods when the leading intellects were most interested in the human side of the universe, the spiritual side, rather than the physical, and deduced the attributes of God from the inner forces of the soul rather than from the forces of nature or in addition to them, — that is, applied the methods of spiritual science, rather than of physical science, to their theological inquiries, and so found a God who was not only law, force, and a quasi intelligence, which was all outward nature proved Him to be, but was also a conscious personality, a righteous, loving, and holy being, which the laws and endowments of the human soul prove Him to be, just as certainly and by as legitimate a method of proof.

Such a period was that just preceding the present. Through the first half of the present cent-

ury, the most influential thinking was from this spiritual stand-point more concerned with the spiritual laws than the physical laws, and claiming for them at least an equal authority in disclosing the nature of Deity. In that period there were mighty preachers, such as Robert Hall and Chalmers in England, and Channing in America, who were listened to by the cultivated intellect of the English-speaking world as no preaching is listened to just now, partly from their great ability, and partly from their representing the intellectual tendency of the time.

The poetry of Wordsworth and his school had a most powerful influence in diffusing the spiritual view of things. Scott, the great novelist of the first portion of the half-century, wrote no theology, but the intense and pure human interest of his tales set his influence on the spiritual side, and his biography confirmed it by showing his deep personal conviction and feelings in the same direction. Dickens, who occupied the latter portion of the period, from the intensity of personal tenderness and human sympathy which he awakened in millions of his generation, exerted indirectly a powerful preparatory influence on the spiritual side. Coleridge was, by universal consent, the profoundest thinker of that period. He did more than all others to turn the tide of thought from the material and prudential deadness of the preceding century in the direction of spiritual life, — regenerating the mind of young England and America. He did not address the

masses, except mediately, by teaching and inspiring the teachers and directing the genius of his time. The earlier writings of Carlyle were powerful auxiliaries on the spiritual and human side.

Looking back through the ages, we find at intervals such periods and such groups of powerful thinkers, who set a spiritual stamp upon those periods, and both turned and followed the bias of the general mind to the human and spiritual view, in contrast and in alternation with that of material interests and physical science. We might go back in this review of alternations even to the Psalmist, the first great spiritualist, whose influence has never ceased. His devotional pieces, inspired by the spiritual theology, have been dear to myriads of responsive souls unto this day.

But the chief representative, in all time, of this spiritual view of the Deity, was Jesus Christ. His was the most largely, most intensely human soul that ever wore flesh. Accordingly He knew his own soul, and through that knew all souls better than any other has known them. And it was through this knowledge that He knew God. As the men of physical science know what God is as to some of his attributes, from the contemplation of the laws of forces working in the material part of creation, so He knew other attributes of God, from being profoundly conversant with the laws and forces working in the other part of creation, *i. e.* the souls of men. He reasoned from one class of facts as legiti-

mately and to as sure a conclusion as the men of science do from another class of facts. He would not deny their conclusions, and they are not competent to deny his. It requires both conclusions combined to make up the full and comprehensive idea of God. From his point of view, his field of experience and contemplation, Christ saw and knew that God was not only power, but beneficent power; not only intelligence, but conscious intelligence; not only physical law, but moral law also; not only physical force working in matter, but a spiritual force, working in souls; not only a presence, but a person; not only the organizer of the outward worlds, but the father of souls, having as intimate relations with his spiritual offspring as with his material creation, — a being possessing the attributes which He has endowed our souls with, only without the imperfections and limitations, — infinitely transcending them. Such was Christ's God, — a righteous, merciful, loving God, — a God to be loved and trusted and leaned upon and obeyed and prayed to, to fly to for refuge, to turn to for light and comfort, for the law of life and for hope in death.

As the mathematician, Leverrier, so great in his sphere of knowledge, from observing some facts in the material heavens knew that the planet Neptune existed out there in the farther spaces of our system, knew it, knew its dimensions, its distance, its orbit, before it was seen as well as after, so Jesus, from observing the facts and needs of the human soul, knew that the infinite

Father, the wise and loving One, exists up in the spiritual heavens, a sure and necessary reality that must be there and needs not to be identified by the fleshly sight.

This is the God that the physical science of our day, as represented by its leading men, does not find nor recognize. They find only power and an intelligent tendency operating in the universe; they do not find the Christian God; in all honesty, they fail to find Him. Well, of course they do not and cannot find Him at the end of their line of thought. They deal only with material phenomena, physical facts and appearances, and the forces revealed in them. And these cannot reveal Christ's God. They cannot find Him, of course, at the bottom of their crucibles, nor at the end of their telescopes, nor in the field of their microscopes, nor between their rocky strata, nor in the analysis of brains and blood. Christ did not find Him there. He is not there. It is not their province to deal with the greater facts of the soul; or if they do, they naturally but vainly and presumptuously try to class them, through their passion for generalization and unity, in the same order with their material facts. It is natural that they should be unwilling to recognize a class of facts and laws outside of their line of thought, so they propound the idea that the human soul itself is nothing but the last and finest efflorescence of matter, — matter at first inorganic dust, then passing into life in its lowest forms, and thence

up through slow and numerous stages till it culminates in soul, — the soul of a Newton, a Shakespeare, a Plato, a Christ; the soul with its holiest and sweetest affections, its imperial will, its sacred conscience, its large discourse of reason, looking before and after, its heaven-scaling imagination, its heroism of duty and of love and of sacrifice, its hopes aspiring to immortality, all this and these growing out of the dull clod by chemical laws, without a loving God, a conscious God, a righteous God, to foresee it, to bring it forth, to endow and inspire it! Such is the poor conclusion that physical science, when transcending its rightful province, leads to.

As for the human body, let the men of physical science deal with that as they will; that is matter, and subject to the laws of matter; that is within their province. Let them establish their latest hypothesis, that it comes from an ape, from a fish, from a shapeless jelly. Let them establish that; if it be the truth we will welcome it. All truth is good. God-speed all the seekers of it! We need have no fears of the development theory in the realm of matter. But as to the soul, this theory can never be anything but an hypothesis; can never be established. And is it an hypothesis that it is philosophical to entertain? Is it sound philosophy or good sense to seek the origin of soul in a source beneath itself, rather than above it? Does dead matter impart that which it has not, and which it does not know of? If there is a soul inman, is there not a

greater soul above it, from which it came, and whose image it faintly bears? If man loves and thinks and wills, is there not a God that loves and thinks and wills, and has enabled him to do so?

But I discuss this matter at a disadvantage, for I am not scientific. When the great oracles of physical science speak and declare this or that to be a fact or law or principle, the world listens with deference, as if the matter were settled and there could be no appeal. And so it is settled, and ought to be accepted, if the matter be fairly within the province of physical science. When all the masters of physical science agree that the matter is within their province, and agree in the doctrines about it, I know not who can take an appeal, or who should wish to.

And as to the matter of the being and attributes of the Deity, several living adepts in physical science, as such, do not find or need such a God as the Psalmist worshiped and Jesus found and declared, or revealed, therefore they cannot recognize such a God, and more than doubt the existence of such an one, and many listen to them as if their dictum of science must be the final word on the subject. And now shall we not be swift to say, Away with the old-fashioned notions about a personal, or a conscious and loving God, — such notions answered well enough for the days of men's ignorance, but now the light of science is poured upon them they must disappear like the mists of morning before the ascending sun? Away with them! But stop!

Stay the verdict a little! There have been and are other adepts in science, as good as any of these, who do not acquiesce, who deny the conclusion, who indeed come to the opposite opinion. Let me call a great name, — Faraday. Faraday was the peer of any one or all these living men, their peer in their own realm; he just preceded them in time, — he has been dead but four years; he was their teacher and master. Any one of them will be fortunate if he shall be found at the close of life to have added so much to the sum of human knowledge, or acquired so great and lasting renown. He led the way into those realms of thought in which they have advanced so far; he foreshadowed and prophesied and partly realized their grandest generalizations. In science he was king so lately, and these men his worthy successors, and only that. And Faraday earnestly held, and solemnly declared, that in the actual discoveries or legitimate conclusions of physical science there is nothing that in the least invalidated the simple beliefs and pieties of the Christian faith; that physical science could not go a jot beyond the facts and forces and laws of the material world, and must leave the spiritual realm untouched. The warm and beautiful piety of his childhood he kept through life, lived by it, and died by it, and found nothing in science to shake its foundations or dim its brightness. He used to pass from his scientific throne in the Royal Institution, where he nightly instructed and delighted the intellectual *élite* of the English-speak-

ing world, to the desk of a little chapel of an obscure sect in one of the by-ways of London, where with prayers and homilies he led the services of a small and humble assembly of fellow-believers, — pass, I say, from one to the other, and feel no incongruity or inconsistency, loving the truth that is in Christ as sincerely as the truth that is in nature and science. His keen and searching intellect gave him a knowledge of nature, and the God of nature; his pure and even childlike heart, his affections and instincts, his conscience and his needs, and his spiritual dialectics, gave him the God of the soul, the heavenly Father, and the two faiths blended harmoniously and naturally into one in Him, and needed no reconciling, for they felt no contradiction.

Now, if the men of science are to be listened to with special deference on questions of theology, which is most worthy of our ear, Faraday or one of his successors? I should say the former. His theology is the larger generalization, embracing not only all that external nature can teach or intimate, but also all that human nature, in its most interior depths, can disclose to himself and to such a spiritual eye as that of Jesus Christ. His was the more comprehensive mind, looking both outwards and inwards, seeing two worlds, while they seem to see but one. The theology of physical science alone is one-sided, narrow and cold, a mere ganglion of forces, a code of physical laws. Add to it the theology of a living conscience and a loving soul, and a tender,

trusting heart, and you enthrone over the universe, and over your own being, the living God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Each age is apt to regard itself as a finality in the world's progress, as if the abiding wisdom had been achieved at last. And there are those, not a few, here and everywhere, who imagine that this physical science which just now dominates the minds of men is the last word of wisdom; that henceforth all great intellects and the highest genius will be devoted to physical science as the only thing worth knowing, and the only source of knowledge and ground of faith, and accordingly that the old religious philosophy of the gospel and of the human heart is gradually but surely fading out, is hopelessly moribund, and can never be revived and reinstated. But fear not this result, ye who deprecate it; hope it not, ye who desire it. This age of material inquiry and progress will be succeeded by an age of spiritual activity, just as it was preceded by such an one, and just as the two have been alternating through all time, according to that irrepealable tidal law which operates in all human affairs, the law of alternations, of action and reaction. It seems as if human progress had to be made one side at a time. The spiritual side sometimes absorbs the intellectual forces of the world, and moves on at a great pace, and then that force goes over to the material side, which had got far behind, and fetches that up, and carries it ahead to a certain bound, and then changes again.

Just now, as I have said, physical science absorbs the best intellect and commands the world. It is right that it should, — right and needful, — now is its turn. I rejoice in its progress. I bid it God-speed. I honor and admire the men who are so grandly carrying it forward ; it is their mission, and nobly do they fulfill it. It is their day, and nobly do they improve it. But they have their limitations ; they cannot span the whole field of human interests, they cannot grasp and hold up all truth. And by all the analogies of history, and all the needs of the world, we may be sure that the next group of great men that shall come upon the stage will be men who will carry their power and genius into the science of the soul, will reëxplore the human, the spiritual world, carry forward that side of progress, and revive the truths that their predecessors are omitting or losing. The next age will be a spiritual one, and will use and not be used by that physical science which now has all things its own way.

But that spiritual epoch will not arrive in season for us, except it be the youngest of us. We must finish our career under the present *régime.* Therefore we must take care to keep our balance, — resist the drift so far as it is partial and one-sided, — take its splendid benefits, but not surrender our whole souls to it ; not let it, while it illumines and enriches us on one side of our nature, impoverish and starve us on the other side.

And now this closing word of counsel.

If there is in you any of the old faith in the God of the Gospel, the God and Father, whom Jesus found and knew and prayed to, oh, keep it, and cherish it, and strengthen it. Put away, if you can, and let the disclosures of science help you to put away from you, what has been superstitious and narrow and grossly anthropomorphic in that faith; but the faith itself, in its essence, keep and hold fast, as a most precious possession. It is the largest philosophy, it is the widest generalization. Depend upon it, no science can deal a legitimate blow against it, or bring a valid reason against it. There are no greater intellects than those that have maintained it. Out of the bosom of it have come the noblest heroisms, the most Christlike sacrifices, the best strength and sweetness of our nature. It is the loving and confiding faith, it is the bond of human brotherhood, it is the pledge of immortality, it is sweet peace in believing. In your strong, bright hours of health and prosperity you may imagine you can do without it; but in the dark hours, in weakness and in grief, in loneliness, in sickness and death, it ministers to a great need, — supporting, consoling, luminous. It is a faith that is as wise as it is happy, as strong in its roots of reason as it is beautiful in its blossomings of feeling. The prayer it inspires is meat and drink to the soul. Happy is he, and as wise as happy, whose heart panteth, thirsteth for God, for the living God.

1871.

XVIII.

HATH GOD SAID IT?

And he said unto the woman: Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? — *Genesis* iii. 3.

THIS was the question put by the serpent to Eve, in the Garden of Eden.

This curious account of the first transgression of the divine law by man is, of course, allegorical. As Coleridge says: "No unprejudiced man can pretend to doubt that if in any other work of Eastern origin he met with trees of life and knowledge, or talking snakes, he would want no other proofs that it was an allegory he was reading." It was the Oriental method, and it has been adopted by Æsop in Greece, La Fontaine in France, and by many another moralist in every age and country, down to the last volume of Froude. It has been found a popular and effective way of teaching moral and philosophical truth.

This Bible account of transgression and fall in Eden is none the less true for being an allegory. It is as true, to all moral intents, as if it related actual facts. We do not know much as to the actual facts about the fall of the first man and

woman; but we know a good deal about the fall of men and women nowadays, including our own, — and we know that the way of it is pretty accurately represented under that allegoric veil. It cannot be true that "in Adam's fall we sinned all," but it is true that other men fall in about the same way, and I suppose that the narrative of his fall, written ages after his day, was a reflex or transcript from the common experience of men.

The desire for forbidden things, excited by curiosity and appetite, burns in every breast, as in that of the first man or woman. There arises the doubt as to its being so very bad, then the denial, then the deed. That is the natural history of sin or wrong-doing, whether in Eden or in Boston. The same forbidden fruit grows beside all waters, and tempts, and is plucked and eaten alike on the banks of the Euphrates and of the Charles.

Any person endowed with the ordinary mental and moral faculties and breathing a healthy moral atmosphere in childhood, very early makes the fundamental moral distinction between things right and things wrong, between things permitted or obligatory and things forbidden. Whether the moral feeling that makes this distinction is innate or acquired, whether an intuition or an induction, whether derived from or preceding the experience of the useful, is an old and forever open question which we need not decide. Nothing vital is ever found to depend on these open

questions of speculative philosophy. This faculty or feeling, however originating, is there early in the healthy mind. It is at once a perception and a sense of obligation. Its word is, "This thing is right, do it; that thing is wrong, do it not." Do the right and thou shall live, or it shall go well with thee; the wrong and thou shalt die, or it shall go ill with thee, — the words life and death being an ancient expression for the rewards and penalties in general, however various in form and degree.

And this moral sentiment or perception couples itself in each person's mind with that person's highest religious idea, however that idea may shape itself in his mind. God hath said it, he feels, whether He said it as so many have believed, in literal words, in some far-off, primitive Eden, or disclosed it in vision to the patriarchs, or bade Moses write it on the stone tables, or breathed it by the mouth of inspired prophets, or by the teaching of his anointed Christ, or whether that word speaks itself in the instincts of each soul, in the law of man's being and the constitution of the universe. God hath said it, — the highest, — whether that highest be law or lawgiver; whether it be the course of nature or one who devises and directs it, — either way, the supreme authority, the personal or impersonal veracity of things and arbiter of destinies.

Thus the case stands, with each soul of man in more or less distinct consciousness, or thus it has, at some time or other, stood with it. A

sense of right and wrong, with God, the highest, back of it, and a clear or a vague sense of mighty consequences depending on obedience, — as it were, a question of life and death. What more can be wanting to keep the soul loyal?

But then there comes, — such is the moral scheme of the moral universe, — there comes a test and a trial. The desire for some forbidden thing, or for a forbidden neglect, gets awakened, outward things kindle and stimulate it. It grows strong and stronger. It takes possession. It enlists the imagination, which exaggerates the profit or the pleasure. It becomes passion. It raises in the soul a mist, a flame, a smoke, a whirl, that blinds the inner eye, confuses the moral ideas, distorts the right proportion of things. The surest things of the spirit begin to look dubious. The old foundations of moral faith shake and totter, as to the eye and brain of a drunken man. Fatal questions arise. Is there, after all, such a real and sharp line between right and wrong? Is it so very bad and dangerous, this thing called wrong? Perhaps it is only an illusion, the relic of an effete superstition, a dream of foolish childhood, an old-world fable. The bewildered soul doubts, and it is as if the wily devil of the old legends laughed at the silly scruples. It is as if the serpent hissed in the willing ear, the old cavil, the deadly doubt, "Hath God said it?" Encouraged by the doubt, the disobedient desire seizes the moment, and blazes and presses anew, and the doubt grows affirma-

tive and stiffens into denial, and the next serpent hiss is, "No, God hath not said it. Thou shalt not surely die; it is not so serious a matter; no great evil will come of it," — and then the Rubicon is passed, the luscious apple is plucked and eaten. And such is the fall of man in all times, with or without the Bible record of the first instance of it, and just as truly without as with it.

I suppose that any one who could recall his first transgression, or first great one, or any leading one, would be conscious of some such reasoning within himself at the time, either patent or latent, explicit or implicit, and that if he be capable of a fine moral analysis, he would recall a certain revulsion of feeling at the moment when he took the bad leap, as if something in him protested and revolted, and would draw back at the last moment, and tried to cry out, out from his abused and dumb heart, "but God hath said it after all," and that he did the deed with a certain trembling of the will, and a certain shiver of apprehension, as if God were in earnest in the prohibition, and something dreadful might happen to him, — as though the experiences of Dathan and Abiram, and Ananias and Sapphira, though but mythic legends, might come frightfully true on the spot. But then his guilty apple is luscious to his appetite. It does not choke or poison him, — nothing happens. There is no catastrophe; the earth does not open to swallow him, no thunderbolt out of heaven strikes him, the detectives are not on his track, his fellow-men do not frown

upon him nor shun him, as if they saw the mark of Cain on his forehead. He does not hear the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Things seem to go on just as before, with the world and with him. He still lives and prospers. So, after all, God hath not said it, or did not really mean it, and does not care about it — takes no notice of it. It is all one with the righteous and the wicked, so-called in the old Bible cant. And there are more bright apples on the tree of life, and new crops of them to come. Let us take our fill of them.

That is the real atheism. Not the grave, truth-seeking, law-searching, law-revering speculations of a Darwin or a Mill, but the loss of the sense of moral distinctions. He who loses that, giving ear to the serpent hiss, though on his knees he wear away the altar stones in worship of the God of the creeds, is truly without God in the world, or his God is but an empty name, a fetisch, an emotional phantasm.

Of course I do not mean to say that every transgression or wrong act is the conscious result of the elaborate process of reasoning I have described, or necessarily involves the final or total loss of the moral sense, or the triumph of absolute atheism. I speak of tendencies, and of the origin and growth of moral skepticism, and of the principles, or rather the denials, that underlie the fall of man and of men.

In all transgressions and tamperings with evil, it turns out in the end that God hath said it.

The divine law vindicates itself in human experience. The decree, thou shalt surely die, is realized, not in the letter of it, but in the spirit of it. Slowly, it may be, by subtle processes, by gradual advances and in unexpected ways; but somehow or other the sentence gets executed.

This result takes place most obviously and speedily in those cases in which human law can and does coöperate with and re-affirm the divine, and the sin is declared a crime, and the sword of human justice becomes the symbol of that invisible sword of the cherubim which we read of, placed at the east of the Garden of Eden, — the flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Very affecting to me are the brief newspaper records of trial scenes that take place in our courts, with such alarming frequency of late years, — trials for one or other form of fraud or defalcation. I do not happen to have known any one of these criminals, and I have not entered a criminal court these twenty years. But sometimes I try to imagine the scene. There, in the prisoner's dock, — the place of infamy, in which have sat from day to day, from year to year, a long succession of thieves and forgers, and burglars and adulterers, — there sits now, on that horrid seat, a man perhaps quite young, or in the prime of middle manhood; a man who but lately held a place of large and honorable trust; the intimate of honorable men and beautiful and virtuous women, respected by his neighbors, per-

haps worshiped in his pleasant home, and never dreaming that he should become unworthy of his position, or lose his self-respect; and now there he is in that seat of shame. I imagine that he almost doubts his own identity, or thinks it is a horrid dream. I see him pinch himself, to see if it is himself, and if he is awake, and the scene is real, — and indeed it is real.

But how came he there? Some time lately or far back, at one large haul or in successive driblets, he took money or money's worth, that belonged to another, or was confided to him in sacred trust. He needed it. Not till after a sharp fight with his higher nature could he take it. But the exigency was pressing; some expensive and passionate taste or appetite demanding gratification, or a certain style of living to be maintained, or some old debts to be paid that would wait no longer, or a promising opportunity of speculation by which to get rich once for all, or out of weak good-nature to assist some extravagant or speculating friend who had got into trouble, — no matter what. But how could he take it. Hath not God said, "Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of that tree?" but then his need was so urgent; and then the serpent whispers within him, "Hath God said it?" Is it so very wrong? The money is but trash, a thing of mere conventional value, and this particular money will not be missed, nobody will go hungry for want of it. No, God hath not said it; and that awful barrier being broken down, the rest is easy. He

will replace the money seasonably, or he will hide the theft in a maze of figures, and nobody be the wiser or the worse, — and the deed is done.

Then comes the end. Some confederate proves weak or treacherous, or the figures cannot be made to lie hard enough, or a keener eye than he expected reckons up the columns, then the exposure, and then that court-house scene.

The real fall of the man took place when he, in thought, parted with honesty, abandoned his principles, broke with the eternal justice, and the serpent whispered the infernal question, "Hath God said it?" and "Ye shall not surely die," and "There is no great harm in it." That was the fall. The rest is a mere shuffling of accounts, a race with the detectives, a game of hide-and-seek with the laws of the land, and he is worsted in that unequal game, and there he is in the dock.

Oh, it must be a very tragic scene there in the court-house, — a fair life blighted, the priceless jewel of honor and a good name gone, hope gone, and the meshes of evidence gathering about him, wife or sister or mother or children crouching at his side, or waiting in agony in the lobby or in the ruined home, — waiting for the verdict. And it comes, and the sentence, and the prison-van, and the grated cell, and the world shut out, — except to memory and remorse. It must begin to look to him as if God had said it; he does not die, indeed; but I think he must sometimes wish he could, or at least that he had never been born.

One more act of the drama must be noted, though not always public. The petitions for a pardon circulate. Tender-hearted neighbors thoughtlessly intercede for the poor convict; sympathy for him is everywhere awakened. Broken-hearted wife, or mother, daughter, sister besiege the president or governor, on their knees, day and night, with tears and groans, praying for a pardon for him. It was a thoughtless act, they plead; he did not mean it; his heart was always right; he was the best of husbands, fathers, neighbors; and he is so penitent; and his family will starve. Oh, give him back to us, that we may live, and that we may smile again, in the poor faint way that we can smile again. And the poor distracted magistrate cannot bear the sight of the tears and the heart-break, and he yields so often as almost to defeat the solemn ends of justice. I will not reproach him. I should be weaker still, I fear, in his place. I have heard an old governor of Massachusetts describe the heart-rending scenes of this sort that he had gone through. It requires nerves of steel to withstand such appeals. But the Brutus element is wanted in the magistrate. In the present state of society, with such frequency of crime and such looseness of principle, a sense of the sanctity of the eternal laws, and the dread testimony that God hath said it and it must stand, is a higher duty, a nobler virtue in magistrate or man than sweet compassion and tender-heartedness. The easy frequency of pardons is only less alarming,

and only less clearly on the soft-voiced serpent's side instead of God's, than the frequency of fraud and theft.

The prohibitory word of God is equally made good, and his law vindicated as surely, if not so visibly, in cases of sin undiscovered or unpunishable by man, and when human law cannot or does not coöperate with the divine.

Who committed that murder the other day out yonder? Man knows not. It is a secret. But there is a man somewhere, who, if still alive, is a miserable vagabond on the face of the earth, carrying the intolerable burden of his guilty secret, trembling perhaps at every foot-fall he hears, with no hope of another hour's peace and conscious safety on earth, harrowed by remorse and fear, dying a thousand deaths in the life-long fear of one, his very sleep a terror; as with Macbeth, there is for him, "nor flying hence nor tarrying here." That man knows that God has said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die" — or worse.

And in crimes less flagrant, and sins less black in men's sight, the primal prohibition still stands unrevoked, and the dread threat is still executed somehow. Do anything against honor and truth, probity and purity, and the penalty in some shape is inevitable as death. You will feel it in some weakening of the faculties, or some waste of intellect, or some pangs of physical pain or decay, or some loss of good men's respect and confidence, or some remorseful memories, or,

worst of all, perhaps, the loss of moral sensibility, or that hardness of heart and that death of the soul that gayly exults in evil and infamy and makes its shame its glory. God hath said it, and all human experience re-affirms it.

Take your religious ideas and your moral faith from what source you will, from the Bible records, from your own soul's intuitions or inductions, or from the last results of science; no matter which, for they all agree on this point, — that as to these prohibitions and penalties God hath said it, and this law is the surest of facts. As has been well said, "Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written upon the tablets of eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for cruelty and oppression, for lust and vanity, the price has to be paid at last. Justice and truth alone endure and live. Injustice and falsehood may be long lived, but doomsday comes to them in the end."

None of us are so old or so strong as not to need the warning. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. But it is around the young heart that the serpent likes best to wind its glossy coil, and whisper the fatal doubt, "Hath God said it?" Young men in the new press and whirl of life's business and pleasure, in the bewilderment of passion and in the dazzle of falsely shining opportunity, and in the too easy-going morality of society, are peculiarly exposed to the wiles of the doubting tempter. And earlier than that, even, the peril begins. Boys!

dear boys! listen to me a moment. You hardly need that I should tell you what things are right and good to do, and what are forbidden and wrong; your own hearts have already divined the difference. But whenever you are tempted to do a wrong thing, then will you remember what I have told you to-day, that God hath said it, and when you doubt that you are lost and the serpent is strangling the best life out of you, and so long as you remember it and drive away the doubt, your life shall be beautiful and noble and happy.

Never say of any wrong thing, "Just this once," for then you will be almost sure to say, "Just once more," till at last "Just this once" has grown into "There's no harm in it; who's afraid?" Set your heel promptly and firmly on that foul serpent, and for his accursed doubt give him back your strongest certainty, your truest, noblest assertion, "God hath said it."

1871.

XIX.

RIGHTEOUSNESS FIRST.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. — *Matt.* vi. 33.

WE have had here lately a series of discourses, without much order indeed, and with some interpolations, but in some sense a series, trying to show the connection between the religion of Christ and morality, or that religion is ethical in its basis and substance, and that its founder's principal aim was to enjoin just conduct, righteous living in its broadest sense, including all moral excellence, sweetness, and purity, leaving all else in life second and subordinate.

But things may be secondary and yet of great importance, and holding things subordinate does not mean that they are to be suppressed or ignored. Our view, therefore, of the Christian system would not be complete unless we considered what is the place and what are the relative claims of things secondary and subordinate.

The moral laws, though the highest, are not the only laws of this universe. Righteousness, or rightness, or moral obedience, whatever we may call it, is the best thing for man, but not the

only thing that befits him, or that his Maker provides and intends for him. God would have men morally right and holy before all things else; but He would have them much else besides. Jesus, in our text, puts righteousness first, but says that other things will be added. These other things which He had just mentioned are meat and drink and raiment, or, in a larger statement, things necessary or convenient in our life, things for the body and the senses, things beautiful and pleasant, the world's good things of benefit and pleasure. "Your heavenly Father," He says, "knoweth that ye have need of these things." There is no morality in getting or receiving or enjoying these things. But in the order and structure of the world they are adapted to man and man to them, by a law which is of divine enactment, though distinguishable from the moral law, to be respected, therefore, in subordination to the moral law, whose prerogative it is to supervise the degree and the manner in which these things may be sought and enjoyed.

Then in the opposite direction, at the opposite pole, there are spiritual things, offices of piety, modes of worship, beliefs respecting things invisible, respecting God and the unseen hereafter, faiths, ordinances, rituals. Experience shows that there is implanted in men a proclivity to these things, a want of them, great comfort and enjoyment in them. There is a correspondence between them and the structure of the human soul. There is, therefore, a divine law respecting

them. To indulge in and cultivate them is according to a law of God; not a part of the moral law, distinct from that, secondary to that, not so obligatory as that, not to be put in competition with that, subordinate, but still a divine law. Jesus himself expressed in words, and still more in his life, how precious and important He deemed these spiritual matters for Himself and disciples. We should hardly know Him apart from these. Yet they were not fundamental with Him as the moral law was. He did not inculcate them with the same explicitness and urgency, did not command them in the same tone of authority as He did righteousness and kindness and purity and fidelity. He did not make them the prime essentials of life, as He did obedience to the moral law. He gave them a high and large place, but not the highest and largest, good and precious, though not first and best.

Now there are persons who put this spiritual law, and the offices of piety, in the paramount place, above even the law of righteous living. And also, there are other persons who practically place the goods and pleasures of the external world foremost, and whose theory of life is to get and enjoy as much of them as they can without permitting the moral law to interfere. And there are still others who make the moral law supreme, sometimes to the virtual exclusion of one or both of the other two.

Let us see what results these three tendencies

or theories of life lead to. And we can see this best, not by looking at individuals, but at a race, a class, or an epoch in history.

The ancient Greeks furnish an illustration of the worldly and sensual theory of life. They knew nothing better than pleasure as the chief good and highest aim of life. Their religion was the worship of the beautiful. Their highest perfection was that of the bodily form and its senses. Their devoutest hymns on solemn occasions were but transcendental love-songs. They had no idea of morality except as a display of social good-nature and obedience to the laws of the land. Their mythology was purely ornamental. To enjoy life in a superficial and sensual way was the supreme business of life. And the fine genius and taste of that people preserved this theory of life from abuse and degradation as far and as long as such preservation can ever be possible. The theory had with them the fairest possible trial, but it failed. It proved to have two radical defects. First, it made no provision for pain and sorrow, provided no refuge or support for the afflicted and distressed; and as these constitute a very large class everywhere, a class to which multitudes always belong, and to which everybody, sooner or later, belongs for a time, the masses of the people were ready to listen to the Christian missionaries, whose appeal were specially addressed to that class. And secondly, this way of life could not make the state strong and enduring. It ran out, by an inevitable ten-

dency, into luxury, sensuality, profligacy, effeminacy. Manly strength decayed, patriotism perished, the country perished, the system collapsed. It would not do. Men and nations cannot live long by it and be strong and self-preserving. It is in violation of the eternal laws, the fixed order of things. The moral laws were subordinate, and indeed faintly recognized. They were a splendid race, with the rarest and most brilliant endowments, physical and mental. But the law of things cannot be disregarded with impunity. They disappeared from among the powers of the world, and their posterity, even in day, this cannot be built up into a respectable nationality.

Observe now an experiment of an opposite kind, that was tried later and on a larger field, and which was, in a manner, the natural reaction from the Greek experiment, which was also largely the experiment of Rome in its later days.

In the Middle Ages, under a perverted form of Christianity, Europe was given over, as one man, to a religion of pietism and rituality. The Catholic church was the recognized representative and organ of the heavenly powers; to rest in its bosom, and have its favor and benediction, was the highest earthly condition. It was salvation and peace. The pure and lofty morality of Jesus Christ was a secondary thing, and it could not bless or save a man. In its place were substituted submission to the church, to assent to what it proclaimed as true; penance, confession, prayers, vigils, processions, bead-counting, knee-

bendings, absolutions, anointings (things which gave the priesthood power and money), and which the people thought were more efficacious for salvation than moral goodness. Life in a monastery, spent in seclusion, in ascetic practices and continual prayer, was the high-road to heaven. The theory was not sensual, and it was not moral, but the extreme of spiritualism. It thought to please God best by renouncing the world, — both its enjoyments and its duties. A hyper-spiritual law was made to supersede all other laws. Shams usurped the place of realities. Ecstatic superstitions reigned under the name of the simple, practical, moral Jesus Christ.

Of course such a theory of life could not stand. Intellectual stagnation, besotted ignorance, and moral corruption were its results. Society rotted, and the church, even to its inmost recesses, was the foulest part of it. The great laws always vindicate themselves, and sweep away obstructions. Under the heavy blows of Luther and his coadjutors the system fell throughout a large part of Europe, and was weakened and modified in the rest of it. The nightmare of a predominant and exclusive pietism was thrown off, and a happy deliverance for mankind it was.

Turn now to another experiment on a narrower arena, but sufficiently large : Puritanism in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was a reaction from the popish corruptions of the Middle Age, such as I have described them, and which were continued, abated, but not re-

moved, by the semi-reformation in England. In dogmatic and metaphysical theology this did not change much. Their theology was substantially the same that was taught by St. Augustine in the fourth century. It had been systematized and reinforced in the clear, strong, steely brain of John Calvin.

The Puritans divested the forms and offices of worship of all the popish and Anglican ceremonial, all pomp and show, stripped the priesthood of their fine vestments, and the churches of pictures, images, and all adornments, and all that addresses the imagination and the taste, — made everything bald, hard, and dry. Whatever had been attractive in worship was to them maranatha, — a device of Antichrist.

The Puritan reaction was almost wholly in the interests of morality, a war against the flagrant vices of the time, which pervaded society and defiled the inmost sanctities of the church itself, and cloaked themselves under the very observances and rites of religion.

The Puritans, shocked and disgusted by a wickedness that threatened to dissolve human society, proposed to themselves the noble enterprise of bringing in the kingdom of God and the reign of righteousness, and of crushing out everything that stood opposed thereto, by mild means if possible, but by fines, imprisonments, maiming, and death, if necessary. They would have no divine laws but moral laws, no arbiter but conscience, no purpose in life but to be righteous, no secondary or subordinate ends of existence.

Here was their mistake. The grandest design ever undertaken by men since Christ and his apostles was ruined by the narrowness and exclusiveness of its champions. Their administration of religion was little more than a whip of scorpions to drive men into good morals. They saw the fiery wrath of God brooding over a wicked world. Hell gaped at their feet. The terrors of the Lord hung like a pall of midnight darkness over a lost world. They were mostly sincere; they were sallow, gloomy, joyless men, — joyless except from the occasional flashings up of the hope or assurance of personal salvation. And yet they had an earnestness that made them brave and strong. They saw no fit place or time for the gratifications of sense and the enjoyments of the world. They denied themselves these things, and when they got the power they denied them to others. Sins were enacted into crimes. The fears of conscience were converted into laws of the state. Personal asceticism grew into public tyranny. Theatres were closed, and the actors whipped, according to law, at the cart's tail. Sunday was required to be observed with more than the rigor of the Jewish Sabbath. Even children were subjected to corporal punishments for any levity, any games or amusements. Christmas, and all holidays in which grown people, or children even, were made merry, were abolished. The only pleasure which they retained and permitted was that of psalm singing, and that with a dreary monotony of tunes. In all good faith they

meant to make the world strictly, absolutely, only, moral, — that and nothing else, — no other interests or enjoyments.

Out from this body of men, some two hundred and fifty years ago, came those Pilgrim Fathers of ours, to Plymouth and Boston. Their anniversary occurs this week, the twenty-first. I usually notice it here at this season, and always with the grateful and admiring reverence which I feel for them. Among them were some of the best and noblest of Englishmen and of the Puritans. Never a state had a more grand, solid, and consecrated founding than they gave to this state of ours. Strength, heroic courage and fortitude, self-sacrifice, singleness of purpose and practical wisdom, have never had a more perfect embodiment or a more shining illustration in all the world than in the work and purpose of those men here in New England.

But their theory of life, and their view of God's will, was not sound, not comprehensive, and could not endure. Their theology, which indeed was not specially theirs, still survives, with various modifications and softenings. Their theory of life still lingers in some sects, some families, and in some individual minds, both in New and Old England; but its foothold is limited and constantly narrowing.

In this country, where there is such wide and free space, and where there has been a constant pouring in of all sorts of people and ideas, there has been, perhaps, at no time, any marked and

violent reaction from the rigor of Puritan morality. But in England, under very different circumstances, that reaction was extreme and appalling.

It came on at the Restoration, and the accession of Charles II. Human nature could not and would not endure the pressure of Puritan rule any longer. It was against nature and the divine order of things. If you dam up the flowing waters with masonry ever so strong, the gathering mass will become irresistible and finally force a passage through; and not only that, it will in its mighty rush carry away the whole dam; and not only that, it will scatter the stones and muck and all the *débris* over the fields below, sweeping away to destruction houses and crops and people, and spread hopeless desolation far and wide. So it was in England when the Puritan dam gave way. Pleasure which had been under ban, getting free again, ran hideous riot. Sensuality, debauchery in every form, took unlimited license, from king to peasant, from the court to the village. Duty, justice, honor, purity, everything high and sacred, from having been associated with the hateful Puritan austerity, became the all but universal scoff. The animal chained so long broke loose now, and rushed into vices the most brutal, the coarsest, the most unbridled. "Then," says the historian, "came those days, never to be recalled without shame; the days of servitude without loyalty, and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise

of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave."

If you read the records of that time, you can but wonder how such a Sodom as England then was, could be spared, and become the comparatively moral and steady-going England that we see her to-day.

It would not be right to hold the Puritans morally responsible for such results, for nothing could be further from their intent, their character and their hopes ; but historically responsible they are, responsible as action is responsible for the reaction, the blow for the recoil, the first error for the opposite one that must succeed it.

So we see the mistake of the Puritans. They laid the true and only foundation of the social structure, or the individual character, which is righteousness ; but they would have nothing else but the foundation, no beautiful and well-proportioned superstructure, and so mankind would not live in their house, and in leaving it tore up the very foundations.

Such are three experiments of living, as carried out to their legitimate and historical result of failure, in Greece, in the Middle Age of Europe, and in Puritan England. We see why they failed. Two of them gave the preëminence to the inferior law or interest, and the other put the right law foremost, but utterly renounced one of the others.

So we are brought back to the position we started from, that of our text, righteousness, —

the moral law first and foremost and supreme, but these other things to be duly respected and amply allowed for.

We do not know what experiments are being tried now on a large scale by nations or races. Such experiments cannot be fully understood and measured till they are closed, and the observer stands at some distance in time. No age understands itself as a whole. But it ought to be quite clear what the theory of life is which any individual should aspire to live by in order to make his single experiment of living a success.

That theory is this: The moral law supreme, rectitude, veracity, purity and kindness, first and best. No soul prospers, no life succeeds without these. Any surrender of these, or departure from them, even the least, is a flaw in our armor, a break in our defenses, a mistake that may expand into untold ills, and any wide and constant departure from them involves utter failure, blight, and ruin. Nothing is good or safe for us that we do or get or enjoy in contravention of these. No man ever departed from these that he did not repent of it, if he ever awakened enough to see what he had lost or missed.

But then the other things to be added; and of these, first, the bounties and pleasures of the world; not to appreciate and enjoy these is to suppress a part of our nature and disown a part of the legislation of God. The goods of earth, God made them and fitted them for use, and adapted our faculties and desires to the getting

and enjoyment of them, and it is useless for us to pretend to be wiser and holier than He. It is morbid to imagine that we despise them. All things beautiful are meant to attract and please and educate us, and it is folly to pretend to be above them, or try to keep the soul aloof from them. The senses and appetites are of God's planting, powers of his ordaining, and they are meant to be gratified, and cannot be suppressed without fatally disturbing the divine order. The supreme moral law, voiced in the reason and conscience, must keep watch over these, as is its sovereign right, not to suppress but to limit and subordinate, to grant them all reasonable and safe indulgence and no more; to restrain them from the ruinous excesses into which they will run if uncurbed, ending in covetousness, miserliness, sensuality, brutishness, a wasted body, an enfeebled mind, deadness and barrenness of soul, a failed life. First moral, then happy; first virtue, then pleasure; first duty, then recreation; first the right, next the beautiful and agreeable; first the health and wealth of the soul, next the goods of the world. So much for the sensual and worldly side of things to be added to righteousness.

And now for the other, the spiritual side, — the things of worship and piety. God makes provision for these in the constitution of the soul, and they must not be renounced. Bald atheism, dead materialism, that never lifts its eyes above the earth, is a defective theory of life that can never give dignity to existence, or purity and strength

to morals ; it tends to brutishness. Conscience cannot maintain its supremacy and never did, apart from reverence and the upward look. If we could see this theory of life tried on as large a scale as the others which I have brought to notice, we should see, I predict, a speedier and a more miserable failure.

But what form must piety and worship take ? in what ideas or beliefs must it be embodied ? We cannot prescribe. Jesus himself did not dictate on this point with anything like the distinctness, emphasis, and authority that He did in reference to morality. He shows plainly what was the form or style of his own personal faith and piety. It was purely filial. He was as a child, and God the loving and careful Father, whom He looked up to, trusted, and obeyed. He loved to think that all men would come to feel so, and thus add sanctity and tenderness to the law of right, and give support and peace in trial and sorrow. But it appears that all men cannot take just his view, and who shall say that they must, uniformly and at once, though that is best and happiest.

Why, do we not know that multitudes of his own disciples have worshiped a man as their highest ? And that for centuries they virtually worshiped a woman and addressed their prayers to her, and on her lavished the offerings of their homage, and built their dearest hopes on her love,— the love of the mother of Jesus. Well, they invested the objects of their worship with the highest attributes of beauty and perfection

they could conceive, and what could they do more or better, under whatever name or title they adored and trusted their highest.

And now if there be persons who, under the new intellectual conditions of the time, with new philosophies developed by new methods of thought, cannot adopt the exact language or style of religious thought which Jesus did, or cannot, as his disciples have done, worship a man, nor even an idealized woman, but instead, an infinite, unknown, unnamed power and beneficence, sitting veiled and enthroned behind the moral and physical forces of the universe; if, in all honesty and reverence, that is their highest, and if it inspires them with awe and gives sanctity to the moral laws and gives them solace and light and strength in pain and darkness and sorrow and death, why should we object or refuse them the Christian name, if they like that name? I love to think that Christ himself was so large, broad, tolerant, and catholic in his sympathies as not to disown such men, or even those who have worshiped a man or a woman, doing it according to their light, their thought, their needs, striving earnestly the while to obey their highest, in working righteousness and doing good.

Thus I have tried to unfold the true theory of life, as I think the Master would have me. First and supreme, on the central throne, God's eternal moral law, and then on the one hand the bounties of God, the delights of life, and the beauty of the world, and on the other hand the sancti-

ties and upliftings and solaces of piety; these, too, are supplements, supports, defenses of the central throne. This, I think, is Christ's theory of life for man. I think He meant just what He said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," which is that kingdom, and these things, in such measure as ye can attain to them, in such form as ye can accept them under your conditions of life and of thought, shall be added.

1871.

XX.

HINDRANCES.

Who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth? — *Gal.* v 7.

AND who or what hinders us, or anybody, from living by the truth that we know and the laws that we acknowledge? Something does, for we see it in one another, and confess it in ourselves, that in many things, and perhaps in principal things, we are not what we should be, and fail to do as we ought to do. We do not realize our own ideals of a true life. We accept a higher standard than we come up to. Excellent things of life and character are visibly within our reach; but somehow we fail to stretch forth a hand to seize them, or if we do they slip out of our grasp and are gone.

This experience is so common, and in some degree it is so universal, that the problem how to account for it and what to do about it has exercised the minds of philosophers and theologians in all ages, and each definite solution of it has become a separate religion or creed or sect. It seems to have been the bottom question in most systems of human nature and destiny.

Zoroaster founded an extensively prevalent re-

ligion on the idea that the world is governed by two powerful and co-equal beings or principles, the one working for good only, and the other for evil only, and the result of the perpetual and irreconcilable conflict is what we see and feel and wonder at.

This theory is repeated in another form, in the modern idea which we are familiar with, representing this world as the battle-field in which God and the devil are fighting it out, — human souls being the stakes, with heaven and hell as the two opposite destinations.

St. Paul evidently held one of the philosophies prevalent in his day, which represents the spirit or mind of man as being all right, and tending only to goodness, and the body as the drawback, the hostile power warring against the good, and tending only to evil. But Christians have not widely accepted this view.

The more received belief in Christendom has been in this wise, — that man was originally made upright and pure, and inclined only to good; but there was a catastrophe, a fall, back there at the beginning, and since that human nature has been in a ruined state, and all men disinclined to good and incapable of it; and that the remedy was offered in the death of Christ, re-creating, renewing the nature of man, restoring it to its original condition of purity and righteousness through faith in Christ.

The difficulty with this last theory is, that the facts of life do not correspond to it with sufficient

accuracy, for it is found that where no such re-creation or restoration has taken place, nor even the name or coming of Christ been heard of, there have been some good men, and everywhere many good traits and actions, and that when the re-creation has taken place, in the most approved manner, much evil of disposition and conduct still remains, and the same old conflict between good and evil has to be carried on, with varying and uncertain results. The saints are not always so absolutely good, or the sinners always so utterly bad as to verify the theory with sufficient distinctness.

Being myself neither theologian nor philosopher, in the accepted sense of the terms, I do not know that I have any new theory to propound. I only wish to consider the obvious facts of the case as they present themselves to the consciousness of thoughtful persons, and interpret them according to common sense, and for practical uses.

The matter of fact statement of the case seems to be about this; that there are in each human being the elements which, if they were developed fully and in due proportion, would result in a high, harmonious, admirable character, — the germs of all the excellent and beautiful growths which we here and there witness, separately, for the most part, but sometimes in large and happy combinations. There is nothing in the noblest character that has adorned the world, but that the faculty or sentiment from which it has grown

was planted in you or me or even in the worst person we know of, and is there still, some trace or remnant of it, however suppressed and hidden from sight, and it may be hidden for the most part even from consciousness.

But, then, why does not the good seed spring up and bear its appropriate fruit; why such poor results, why such partial failures and so many absolute and miserable failures? Nothing is gained towards the solution of the question by looking far off for some mysterious cause of the failure or sources of the mischief, such as an invisible, powerful, personal devil, always intent on misleading and ruining us by his treacherous wiles; or a mighty, malignant, abstract enemy called sin, infusing its subtle spiritual poison into our veins; or a pre-historic and imaginary event called the fall of Adam, in which we sinned all. Such hypotheses as these explain nothing; they only throw the difficulty farther back, and raise questions just as hard to answer as the original ones.

We need not go outside of ourselves and circumstances to find the cause of all this failure and short-coming, or the things which hinder us that we should not obey the truth.

These hindrances are nothing else than certain other elements of our nature, which are useful in their place and necessary in their degree, yet of inferior dignity, but which, from unfortunate surrounding influences acquire too much growth and strength and mass, in us and over us; certain

wholesome appetites intensified into morbid cravings; certain proclivities fostered into devouring passions; certain trivial acts grown into tyrannical habits; certain qualities in us which have a use as brakes to hold back, to moderate and steady, but too much used or indulged, grow into suppressive powers, crushing weights, — into apathies and indolences, crippling, neutralizing the higher energies of our being.

Such and such like are the hindrances, one of them here, another there, and in some instances all of them seeming to gather about an individual, to run him down to the lowest point in the scale of character, — the lower elements in turn overwhelming the better ones, as they do more or less in all. They are the rust that impedes fine machinery; they are as untimely frost nipping the tender fruit buds; they are as the hot sun withering unscreened flowers in the summer drought; they are the deep mire that detains the traveler from his journey's end; they are landslides of sand and shingle and barren rubbish, covering up the richer soil and stunting and hiding its nobler growths.

In the outer shed of the sculptor's studio there lies a block of marble. To the common eye it is rough, shapeless, and ungainly, with no form or comeliness. But to the artist's eye there stands imprisoned within that jagged mass, the limbs, the features, the matchless shape of an Apollo. He sees it, and it only needs disincumbering to be visible to all eyes. With his various tools,

some heavy and some delicate, he breaks off chips, polishes away all the obstructing mass, till he comes to the god within, and there it is at last, and now you see it as he saw it from the first. He has created nothing, added not a particle to it, brought nothing from abroad to adorn it or round it out in the perfection of curve and polish. He has only set it free, and behold now what was there before, but now become visible to the dullest eye, the perfect type of manly strength and grace.

It is somewhat so with any rough block of living humanity. It may be very uncouth in shape, repulsive to sight and taste, filthy with vices, heavy with sloth, distorted, jagged, looking fit only to be put away in a prison or a lazar-house, or the friendly refuge and concealment of a grave. Yet underneath these wrappings so foul and coarse and thick, could they be removed, would be found the moral features and vitalities of a true and strong manhood. The germ of every admirable quality is there, not perished, though latent and weakened; pressed down but not destroyed affections; faculties not dead but sleeping, which if reached, wakened, would show forth the true presence of a child of God, a spark of heaven's fire, a ray of heaven's light, imprisoned at the centre, for which there may be small hope that it will ever get released and shine out on earth, but which in other realms of being may yet shine as the stars.

There are gems in the slime and sand of river

bottoms, without form or lustre, that require but to be dug up and touched by the lapidaries' tools to become fountains of light so pure and dazzling that only kings could compete for the possession of them. There are dumb clocks which need only that the detent be lifted, and they would ring out the bright hours of a child's holiday, or a marriage-feast. And there are souls all buried in the slime and rust, that want but to be disengaged and cleansed, to make them the mates of the world's saints and heroes.

But extreme cases are not the most practical to consider. Take the average and general experience. Take our own. We here, it may be presumed or hoped, are not among the most deformed and depraved in spirit, and yet we can claim no preëminence, no exemption from the world-wide disfigurement and short-coming. Whatever others may say of us, either of too much blame or too much praise, we know too well our own haltings and failures, the capabilities in us that have borne imperfect fruit or none, results falling so far short of our own bright ideals, inner promises and possibilities that look so small in their judgment, the road opened to us back there that should have led us direct up to the shining heights of achievement and excellence, and here we are loitering midway or turned off into side-paths, or possibly faced round and drifting down.

Why this poor outcome? What is the matter? Perhaps by careful scrutiny we could discover, each in his own case, what the hindrance is.

I have already mentioned the hindrances in a general way, — what the Bible calls besetting sins. Appetites over-indulged and overgrown, for pleasure, stimulation, excitement, gain, or any worldly advancement, begetting moral apathy, irresolution, dimness of vision, deadness of conscience and will, and so our higher aspirations and faculties get clogged, overlaid, buried up, and we do not get on as we might and meant to, and are not coming out as we hoped and intended, — aye, and still hope and intend, I trust we may say.

And now what is to be done about it? For it is not yet too late. It is not night yet, — nor the day's reckoning closed. And we are not quite at the bottom of the hill; we are not absolutely spell-bound or hamstrung; not stuck fast in the mud, nor buried under mountains of obstruction; the sense and hope of freedom and of power not wholly extinguished.

What will make the hold-back let go? What will lift the detent for us, and set our best energies free? The good old theology answers, "It is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, that must do it for us; that is effectual, and nothing else is." And that is not bad philosophy, even if it were not the Scripture doctrine, which it is. It has the supreme merit of recognizing the universal laws, of setting human and individual efforts and intents in the direction of the divine currents, and of identifying all the separate forces of nature and the soul with the one infinite force

that underlies and comprehends them all. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is sublime, simple, philosophical. Only we must remember that God's Spirit acts in no capricious, arbitrary, or wholly unintelligible way. It acts by laws as uniform and harmonious as those which govern the spheres or the tides, some of which laws we can discern, and the others not yet discovered we must suppose operate as uniformly. It acts through channels and agencies, many of which we can distinguish and understand, and in our need we must look chiefly to these channels and agencies which we know, and know how to make use of. Time and experience may reveal others.

And, without doubt, the agency through which the Spirit acts most universally and most effectively in liberating the mind from its clogs and hindrances, is the human agency, the influence of other minds. Almost any man who has in any good measure overcome his hindrances, and got into possession of his best faculties, and done his work well in the world, would tell us in his confidential moments how he owes his most efficient deliverances, and the inspirations that called forth his energies and gave him success, to some one or several persons, who by their writings, their speech, or their characters, some sort of mental contact with him, have seemed to set him free from the hostile forces that would have hindered him, or that perhaps have long hindered him.

As I write, my eye falls on a page in a lecture

addressed to the students of an English college. The author of it is one of the most eminent of the scientific men of the time. A master in the realm of knowledge, and of thought, and of expression also, — a felt and recognized power in both hemispheres. He is moralizing in that part of his discourse, and he gives his young men a passage from his own most vital experience. I should infer that his chief hindrance in his youth, the thing that threatened to defeat his life, and suppress him, was not a passion or a vice, but sluggishness, a constitutional inertia.

He tells them how much he owed to two writers, — and they are writers so peculiar that while they strongly influence some minds with whom they have close affinity, they fail altogether to reach or touch a still larger class, who need another class of guides and inspirers. Let me freely quote from the passage: —

"It is vain, I think, to attempt to separate moral and emotional nature from intellectual nature. Let a man but observe himself, and he will find, if I mistake not, that in nine cases out of ten, moral or immoral considerations, as the case may be, are the motive force that pushes his intellect into action. The reading of the works of two men, neither of them imbued with the spirit of modern science, neither of them, indeed, friendly to that spirit, has placed me here to-day. These two men are the English Carlyle and the American Emerson. I must ever remember with gratitude that through three long,

cold German winters, Carlyle (not by his presence, but by what he had written) placed me in my tub, even when ice was on its surface, at five o'clock every morning; not slavishly, but cheerfully, meeting each day's studies with a resolute will, determined, whether victor or vanquished, not to shrink from difficulty. I never should have gone through Analytical Geometry and the Calculus had it not been for these two men. I never should have become a physical investigator, and hence without them I should not have been here to-day. They told me what I ought to do in a way that caused me to do it, and all my consequent intellectual action is to be traced to this purely moral source. These unscientific men made me a practical scientific worker. They called out "Act!" I hearkened to the summons, taking the liberty, however, to determine for myself the direction which effort was to take."

Published biographies and private unwritten lives are full of experiences of this kind, showing how much men have owed or thought they owed to one book or writer or another, as having given them the first, or the most powerful impulse that made them what they are.

I remember that Dr. Channing relates that in his youth he was powerfully affected by the writings of Dr. Price, a philosophical writer of the last century, now scarcely known; that Price first gave him such a conception of great principles that from that time through his whole life he wrote the words Love and Right with a capital,

and that he became inspired with that spiritual philosophy that made his own writings so famous and his influence so wide — becoming himself in turn an inspiring force and a strong arm of help to multitudes.

Thirty or forty years ago many of the first minds of England, and not a few in America, ascribed a regenerative power over themselves and minds of their kind to the poetry of Wordsworth. And perhaps a still larger number acknowledge an equal debt to Coleridge.

The writer whom I have just quoted, who considers that the books of two of his elder contemporaries were absolutely the making of him as having first set his mind free, and set him to work with all his might, — I imagine that he himself, by his scientific revelations, his public discourses, and his high moral appeals is a power among the new generations of England, who listen to him eagerly as one who awakens the dormant faculties and makes them act from the level of their best thoughts.

A very large class of persons are more touched and energized by such devotional and practical writers as Thomas à Kempis, who we may suppose has found more responsive readers than any other writer, from the fact that more copies of his work, "The Imitation of Christ," have been printed than of any other book in any language. People do not permanently and continually addict themselves to any book but such as addresses itself to their best thoughts and helps

them to get possession of themselves and their own faculties.

In the Middle Ages all serious people literally fed on the lives of the saints, — a meagre and scarcely wholesome diet, we might say; but it was the best the age afforded, and tended to train the mind in the highest style of character that was then conceived of.

In later times, in Puritan Protestant lands, such as Scotland and New England, we know how whole generations lived mentally and spiritually on their Bible, reading it through and through, and over and over, finding it for them the bread of life, — finding it the broadest channel of the Spirit, — and an energizing and sustaining power in removing their hindrances and directing their lives.

But books are only one of the agencies of the social power of God's Spirit. A still larger one in the aggregate, though not so conspicuous in single instances, is personal presence and weight. Not great writers exclusively, nor renowned thinkers, but obscure men and women with a large amount of mental and moral vitality in them, exercise this liberating power over the smaller number they come in contact with. Meet one who thinks clearly and he helps to clear away your fogginess and perplexity of thought. Force of will, decision of character, in another, helps to lift the shackles of appetite or habit or sloth from your will by mere contact with you. The warm and tender-hearted intenerate your heart, breaking up

the icy crust that has gathered around it. Rich souls enrich other souls. The inspired inspire. The live soul is a battery charged unconsciously with spiritual magnetism which, if it touch us in life's jostle, sends a forceful thrill through every fibre of our being. Examples of noble living shame our slackness, and silently taunt us with our bondage, and strengthen us to burst our shackles. And what we get we also transmit.

Do the young who hear me know, have they considered and fully taken it in, what potentialities of character are lodged within them, requiring only the right impulse or influence to release them and bring them into action? The germs, the potential qualities and faculties out of which has grown all the nobleness of action and character that have graced the world, lie wrapt up in these brains and breasts. But perhaps there is some spell upon them, some clog, some detent, some hindrance, some masterful appetite or habit, or perplexity of thought, or indecision or sluggishness of will: take that off and they shall rise like a released Titan from his sleep, like a Samson from Delilah's lap, like a bird breaking through the tangles of the imprisoning net, like flame bursting through the incumbering ashes.

What shall dissolve the hindering spell for them? What shall lift the detent and set them free to become their possible selves, and do their noblest work? What and where is that liberating power?

The right word, the right influence, the right

thought, the right gleam, the right touch of power, the true *open sesame* is waiting for each one of them somewhere; aye, and seeking them, going round and round them, passing on before, coming up behind, a book, a voice, a presence, an example, a providence, a shock, a force, a gentleness, I know not what. Let them await it; nay, go out to meet it, look and listen for it, put themselves in the way of it, place themselves within the sweep of the divine currents; let them wrestle with their good angels and force the blessing from them. Aspire and ye shall rise. Do the first thing and the next will disclose itself. Ask and ye shall receive. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you.

XXI.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself. — *Psalm* l. 21.

THERE are two sources from which are derived the ideas or impressions that constitute man's conception of God; one is the outward universe, the other is the mental universe; one the natural order of material phenomena, the other the world of thought within, and it requires the suggestions derived from both these sources to constitute a sound and rational theology. If the idea of God be taken only from observation of material nature, the result is materialism; that is, God will be only the sum of blind, unintelligent, purposeless laws and forces, inherent in the material elements and particles that constitute the visible universe. If, on the other hand, our idea of Deity be derived only, or too exclusively from man's mental constitution, we fashion Him in our own image, and make Him too much like a man. This is the error which is implicitly rebuked in our text, and which must therefore engage our present consideration.

We properly and necessarily ascribe certain

attributes of the human mind to the divine mind, as, for instance, intelligence. We can conceive of but one kind of intelligence, with but difference in degrees. And as God is intelligent, if He is anything, He must have our intelligence, only in an infinite degree. And we can conceive of only one principle of justice. Justice in God must be the same as in man, only perfect. And God's benevolence must be the same in principle as man's, however differently and more wisely exercised. But when we go farther, and ascribe to God the passions and imperfections of man, we degrade Him, we adopt unworthy conceptions, we make Him altogether such an one as ourselves, and incur the rebuke in the text.

This theological error is technially called anthropomorphism, or, more exactly, anthropopathy. We need not, however, carry along with us these hard words. They mean, ascribing to Deity the passions and imperfections of a man, and the limitations of a human personality.

This has been the error of all the degraded and savage tribes of men. They have worshiped or heeded, at any rate believed in, deities as senseless, as cruel, as degraded as themselves.

But the higher, and even the highest forms of theology accepted by the advanced races have been vitiated in the same way.

The Hebrew theology, as initiated by Moses, and developed by the great teachers and prophets, was immeasurably in advance of all the existing theologies of those ages. It was unique and

sublime in its conception of the unity, the spirituality, and the moral righteousness which it ascribed to its Jehovah. Yet, to the popular apprehension He was very human in his passions. He was as a man of war. He was given to wrath, and must be appeased by ceremonies and offerings. He could be flattered, coaxed, bribed into the granting of special favors. Men could gratify Him by oblations. He had his favorites. Though his commandments were righteous and holy, He could be bought off when disobeyed and offended. He was to be approached like a human despot, with presents, and conciliated by obeisances and money or money's worth. He was partial, capricious, jealous. In a word, He was like a man, and a Jewish man. Here and there a prophet or psalmist would rise above this low misconception of Deity, and even rebuke it, as in our text; but neither psalmist nor prophet was wholly exempt from it.

At length Jesus Christ appeared and attempted to inaugurate a new theological era. To the apprehension of his sublime soul and his sweet spirit, God was a transcendently lofty and pure Spirit, to be worshiped in spirit and in truth; to be obeyed, trusted, submitted to as a wise and loving Father, having human attributes, for He cannot be conceived of by man divested of these, but only the noblest attributes, such as shone so divinely in Christ's own exalted and beautiful nature — justice, but without anger or vindictiveness; love, without passion or jealousy; grace,

without caprice or partiality, no human blot or imperfection. If Christ's idea of God could have prevailed, then indeed the reign of truth were established, and the kingdom of heaven were come.

But mankind were not prepared, intellectually or morally, to receive and entertain so pure and adequate an idea of God. And no sooner was the presence and personal influence of Jesus withdrawn than those who had assumed his name and who revered his memory, by an unconscious necessity of their partially developed and imperfectly enlightened minds, lapsed back into the old Jewish or heathen conception of Deity, from which they have never got effectually weaned. And in one important particular they were led to exaggerate that Jewish conception and make it more pernicious. Observe how.

Under the Jewish system the human caprices and passions ascribed to Jehovah were limited in their exercise to this present world, and of course men had their actual experience of the general orderliness and beneficence of the divine administration here, to check somewhat a too extravagant idea of the wild play of those caprices and passions. But Christians have had, what the Jews had not, the doctrine of immortality, of the future world as a sphere in which to give an infinite scope for the play of those bad human dispositions which they as well as the Jews ascribed to the Deity. Here was a field where common experience or common-sense could not come in

to check any extravagance in which priestly policy, or the popular imagination and credulity, might be led to indulge. Accordingly, Christians have conjured up the idea of a future fiery hell. They have imagined and believed that God, with the vindictiveness and rage of cruelty characterizing an Oriental despot, only a thousand fold intensified, would find his glory and delight in plunging myriads of his creatures into that burning abyss, to undergo its sharp torments forever. Thus, and only thus He could, they have thought, maintain the integrity of his righteous government and the stability of his throne. And this horrid fate, decreed upon men by their Almighty Creator for transgressions, imperfections, and short-comings which from their fallen and perverted nature they were unable to avoid, could not be averted by any efforts of obedience, but only by special and exceptional grace, interposed here and there in connection with some doctrinal scheme of salvation, or some ceremonial jugglery.

This horrible idea of God and of his future purposes has dominated the Christian world. It was, in its grossest form, the staple of preaching all through the Catholic Middle Age. It has been the basis of Protestant creeds and schemes of salvation, and has had possession of the imaginations of men up to this hour, only softened and made to recede somewhat from the foreground of Christian belief during the present century. It has hung like a pall over the hopes and

joys and natural pieties of all the Christian centuries, making the Sovereign Ruler as it were a man, and weak, cruel, and implacable at that. A man, only a monster of a man.

I do not wish to depreciate the world-wide Christian Church, or its leaders and teachers, more than truth and fact compel me. They have reasoned and acted according to their light. A pure, lofty, and rational theology is necessarily one of the last and slowest growths of the human mind. I gladly acknowledge that, while this conception of God as an imperfect man has bred untold misery, it has not been able to exclude from the minds of Christians all the benign and beautiful influence of the spirit and piety of Jesus Christ. Something of his sweetness and tone of moral purity has run through all the ages, softening the evils and assuaging the sorrows of men in spite of the blighting effects of the anthropopathic theology.

The narrow and degrading idea of God which we have been considering — the too human idea of Him — has in these latter days been powerfully, and I must think favorably, influenced by the rapid advances that are made in the study and knowledge of the material universe. The beautiful theology of the affections which Jesus Christ set forth has seemed to require for its own best efficacy a supplementing of the understanding, or scientific intellect, in order to restore it, and deliver it from the too human narrowness, the low anthropomorphism, into which it has fallen

in the Christian Church. And it may be hoped that the progressive science of the day will help to educate the general mind up to the point of spiritual enlightenment at which it can receive more profoundly, and with less of human alloy, the consummate heart-wisdom of the purest and best inspired of the sons of God.

Consider some of the ways in which the progress of science, or an increased knowledge of the laws and facts of the material universe, tends to divest the Deity, to our conception, of human passions and imperfections.

The science of astronomy has had, and is having, a great influence in enlarging and exalting the idea of God. It reveals space beyond space in limitless extension, filled with worlds and systems, ordered by one law, moved by one power, all their numberless intervolving systems constituting one system, one creation, the domain of one supreme power. The mind that rises to some adequate, however limited and baffled, conception of this vastitude of substance, of extent, of might, and then attempts to conceive of the Power, the Being that shapes and rules the measureless whole, can but bow his head and veil his face in speechless awe, and, like Israel of old, scarcely dare to utter his name or only give Him that sublimest name of the ancient Scripture, *I Am*.

That invisible I Am — He is here at our feet and about our path, and He is there in those far stellar spaces whose distance we can only measure by the millions of years that it takes a ray of

light to come from them to us, and which are still but the edge of the universe. To the All-seeing Eye the earth is but a dust particle, and the sun but a point of light fading out of sight as you recede from it.

Who that takes in this conception, even in the poor limited way that we can, would ever presume to form in his mind a human image of the I Am, or assign to Him, even in imagination, the limitations of a human personality?

Another way in which science affects our conceptions of Deity is by its persistent and successful method of showing all the observable facts and phenomena of nature and the universe to be reducible to general and uniform laws. No interruption of them to be found anywhere, in suns or systems, or invisible molecules, — and none conceivable to the disciplined reason, — no interference, no catastrophes, but one unvarying and eternal order. This view of things may be said to be established in all scientific minds, and as it comes by degrees to be taken in by the general mind, it inevitably affects men's ideas of God. They learn to see in events no evidences of his literal pleasure or displeasure in any human sense of the words. They will cease to impute such a passion as anger or wrath to the Supreme. They will put away the childish terror that looks for special judgments upon special persons. They will know how to estimate such theories as those lately propounded by certain spiritual guides in Scotland, that the depreciation of railway scrip is

a consequence of railway traveling on Sunday. They will cease to look for special providences, or exceptional mercies or favoritisms, and rise to the grander idea of a general providence that comprehends all persons and all events in the parental embrace of a universal and impartial care, and under the all-protecting beneficence of universal laws. In a word, as the established ideas of science pass down and become a part of the public thought, as they do so rapidly in these times, the Deity will rise, in the general mind from the narrowness and fickleness of anthropomorphism, to a sublimer conception, more adequate if less definite, more serene, trustful, and peace-giving.

But what is tending most powerfully to sublimate our conception of Deity, and place his nature beyond analogy with the littleness and feebleness of human nature, is what is called the Evolution hypothesis, — I do not mean Darwinism, which is comparatively a matter of small detail, — I mean the theory first broached by the greatest minds of the last century, such as Kant and La Place, and now entertained, sifted, extended, by the leading minds of this generation; an hypothesis as yet, but master minds are moulding and developing it, and it bids fair to make its way into the general mind, and help to mould and modify the universal idea of God.

From the examination of the solar system, Kant and La Place came to the conclusion that its various bodies once formed parts of the same undis-

located mass, and that mass a vast nebula, a fiery cloud, filling the space which the solar system now occupies; that as the ages rolled away heat was dissipated, condensation followed, the planets were detached before becoming solid, and by whirling and cooling became what we see them, but that the chief portion of the fire-cloud reached by self-compression the magnitude and position of the body which we call our sun. The earth itself offers evidence to the geologist of such a fiery origin, and the recent discoveries by the spectroscope prove that the same metallic substances are common to the earth and the sun.

Such is the outline of the theory as applied to formation of suns and planets. The general Christian mind is not yet prepared even to contemplate the consequences of this theory when carried out. But we here, I think, are ready to face with candor and composure any theory that is presented to us by reverent and truth-seeking minds. The acceptance of it is another thing; that comes later, if it comes at all. This theory put back the period of the fiat of creative energy: "Let there be light," — back beyond all known or calculable periods, into an immeasurable distance, when the worlds were a fire-cloud, and we know not how much farther, — and refers all the present existences and facts of the universe, all phenomena of motion, of life, and even of thought, everything that we see, hear, touch, and even the senses and faculties by which we discern them, to the operation of the same well-known forces that

are all the time playing around us now, and operating in just the same way.

Says one, who by his scientific ability, and by the profound reverence that characterizes all he writes and thinks, is well entitled to expound the theory: "What are the core and essence of this hypothesis? Strip it naked," he says, "and you stand face to face with the notion that not alone inanimate forms of matter, not alone the more ignoble forms of animalcular or animal life, not alone the nobler forms of the horse and the lion, not alone the wonderful and exquisite mechanism of the human body, but that the human mind itself, — emotion, intellect, will, and all their phenomena, — were once latent in a fiery cloud, so that at the present moment all our philosophy, all our poetry, all our science, and all our art — Plato, Shakespeare, Newton, and Raphael — are potentially extant in the fires of the sun."

But is not this atheism, or tending to it? I do not see that it is. On the contrary, instead of dispensing with a Creator, I think I have never come into mental contact with a more sublime and impressive representation of a Creator's stupendous reach of mind. It does not solve the problem of the universe, and account for it without God, it only throws the problem farther back into the realm of the unknown. There are still open the old questions, only in new forms. Who kindled the flames of the vast fire-cloud? Who spread it through the spaces of heaven? Who charged it with germs and latent potentialities of all these

orbed worlds, and these grand and beautiful existences, these crystal forms in the earth, the tree, the flowers, the infinitude of animal forms and vitalities, this human body, brain, thought, feeling, will? Who endowed it with all those forces of chemistry, gravitation, magnetism, motion, heat, electricity, life, — which, operating upon these germs and potentialities, have slowly through the unmeasured ages evolved the successive stages of being, resulting now in this universe of life and order which we behold and form a part of? Who or what did it? Science does not answer, nor pretend to, nor by any searching can it find out. It only penetrates a little farther, step by step, from generation to generation, into the region of the unknown, annexing some small provinces to the realm of the known, while the infinite unknown remains unpenetrated and unapproachable beyond. Science cannot tell who or what did it. But the pure reason, the devout and awed imagination, the instinctive faith, and the craving heart of man, everywhere and forever answer God, using that word only as a name for its awful sense of an infinite and incomprehensible Intelligence and Power, of which we can know nothing, nor conceive anything, except those workings and results which we witness and feebly explore. Science in its utmost reaches of endeavor and achievement cannot, in its theological conclusion, go a jot beyond, or come a jot short of that most ancient and sublime statement in the sacred book: "In the

beginning," whenever, wherever, whatever that beginning was, — "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

The cry of atheism and infidelity has been raised at every step of theological reform in the whole world's intellectual progress. It has been heard in tones of alarm and abhorrence ever since Moses cast down the golden calf and proclaimed the one invincible Jehovah; ever since the prophets were stoned for declaring righteousness more acceptable to God than the blood of bullocks; ever since Jesus Christ was crucified for blasphemy in outraging the prejudices and interests of the saintly Pharisees; ever since Luther assailed the infallible and God-given authority of the popes and let in a flood of spiritual light upon Europe; ever since our own immediate predecessors broke with the dark creed of Calvinism; yet these have all proved to be not infidelity, but steps towards a purer, firmer, wider faith. And we may depend upon it that all the contributions which the scientific intellect is making to our knowledge of the universe will serve to establish the faith in God, and the throne of God, in human souls on a firmer basis of truth and reason, and will ultimately advance true religion, by divesting the idea of Deity of the human weaknesses and littlenesses and meddlings and malignities that have so darkened and degraded it heretofore.

And now, if I can project his horoscope aright, I may venture to delineate the coming Christian

man, as he will stand in the full blaze of the light of this century and the next, the representative of its highest intelligence and character.

The coming man, then, will not be an atheist, but will have the profoundest sense of an infinite, however inscrutable, Intelligence and Power preceding and presiding over the world, and over all its forces, all its changes, and all its products. By the laws that govern every thoughtful and elevated soul, the coming man will worship and adore the Supreme, not by fawning and flattery, as if He were a man, but with tranquil wonder and admiring awe. He will not presume to read off the counsels of God, and jot them down in dogmatic creeds, or minute, specific articles of faith, but reverently study and strive to comply with them, as they from time to time open themselves to view in the laws of the universe, and in the light of his reason, his conscience, and his pure and loving affections.

The coming man will be a Christian who will care little for partisan churches and sects; but I think he will never fail to see a reflection of the divine glory in the face and life of Jesus Christ.

The coming man will pray with or without visible forms and audible words. His thanksgiving will be a heartfelt and joyous appreciation of the bounties and beauties of God's world. His prayer for spiritual benefits will be an aspiration for strength, light, and an access of love and virtue. His prayer for temporal good will be no seeking of special favors, or to enlist the Supreme on his

side of a doubtful issue, or to change the courses of Providence for his special benefit and gratification. But his prayer will be a prayer of submission and confidence, as knowing that the care and good-will and kindly law which includes all worlds and all creatures must include him, and cannot forget or neglect him.

The coming man will thus be a man of faith. For the very essence and sum of religious faith is this trust, — unfaltering confidence in the supreme wisdom and goodness, — trust that all things are ordered well, and will come out well; that there are no blanks, no mistakes, no failures in the divine order and plan; that seeming evil is a phase of coming good; and he may repose peacefully as in the very bosom of infinite wisdom and love, which is capacious enough for him and for the world, and for the worlds beyond worlds through boundless space.

The coming man, according to the measure of his faculties, will be a man of action. Active obedience will be his ruling principle, obedience to the known laws and will of the Supreme. Obedience running out into all duties, all practicable self-culture, all serviceable, benevolent, and affectionate activities among men.

Finally, the coming man, remembering how he owes to new acquisitions of truth all his elevation and all his deliverance from the superstitions and errors that have enslaved and embittered life in past ages, will ever look for and welcome more truth, as being, for him as for all, light, power,

peace and gladness. He will have no fear of any inquiries; will steady himself in front of every theory that commands his attention, desiring nothing but to know the truth, and fearing nothing but to believe a lie.

So shall he go his way fearless and rejoicing through all the realms of thought and knowledge that open to him, striving through trust and obedience to fulfill the beautiful possibilities of his nature, till he comes even unto the stature of the fullness of Christ Jesus.

1872.

XXII.

THOU SHALT SAY, NO.

Thou shalt say, No. — *Judges* iv. 20.

ABOUT fifty years ago, a very eminent minister of this neighborhood preached a sermon from this text, and repeated it in many, if not all, the liberal pulpits near Boston. The sermon made a deep impression, and is remembered to this day by many of the elders among us. I often hear it referred to even now by those who heard it. The text has since been regarded as the special property of the powerful preacher who used it to so much purpose, and I doubt if any other preacher, hereabouts, has presumed to use it since. But a new generation has arisen now, and it is time that that copyright should be considered as run out.

It must be owned, however, that the text is of doubtful value after all. For if we should consider the connection in which it stands in the chapter, and the moral character of the transaction it refers to, and of the person who said it, and of the person to whom it was said, we should have to discard it as immoral, and no fit introduction to a practical discourse.

But, like my predecessor, in the use of it I disown and ignore the connection, and only take it as a most forcible and convenient form of appeal to a certain function of the human will, which has a vital part to perform in the direction of life and the formation of character.

A human being has his destiny, in some measure, in his own hands, depending on his own voluntary determinations. We cannot define exactly the limits of the province of free will, but that it has a province, and an important one, all consciousness attests; we cannot think it into unreality; we cannot adjust our speech into a denial of it. The animals are, and do what their constitution and the circumstances about them determine, — no more, and no less. The tree is subject only to the fixed laws of its being and the outside forces that act upon it. The oak must be an oak and only that, and it must sway unresisting before every breath of wind that visits it. It is affected by every beam of sunshine and by every drop of rain that comes to it. It must take up into itself just the elements that are found in the soil and the air in which it is placed, refusing none and adding none by any choice of its own.

Man also is subject to those laws of his being which he had no choice in enacting, and to the outside influences which he does not invite, and they must needs go far towards deciding what manner of man he shall be. But not exclusively. He can enact laws for himself, impose actions

upon himself, and, what it is our business to consider now, he possesses a certain qualified but real veto-power. He can, to a large extent, not suppress but repress, and hold in check, some of the laws and tendencies and demands of his own nature. And he can, in a degree, reject outside influences and solicitations, push them aside, defy them, avert them. He can veto them, can say "No," to them.

And according as he says it, and says it on right occasions, says it promptly, decisively, and once for all, says it so, or fails to say it so, he maintains or surrenders the splendid self-sovereignty of manhood. A brave, frequent, and absolute exercise of the veto-power with which he is endowed is one of the fixed conditions of success and honor in the world, of self-respect and dignity of character, of harmony with God and the happiness of life.

And first, the exercise of this supreme power in reference to the tendencies and inclinations within one's self. There are tendencies and appetites in every man which, if allowed a free course and full swing, would drag him in the mire and hurry him to his ruin. The meanest of them has slain its thousands. So mean and paltry an appetite as that for stimulating drink counts its victims by millions, and our nature is largely made up of such dangerous proclivities, some inborn and some acquired. There is in man, also, a certain inscrutable, central authority, the mysterious Ego, the indefinable "I myself," whose

office is to watch over these necessary but dangerous members of the internal commonwealth, and keep them to their limits, and say *No* to each and all their demands for undue power and over-indulgence. No man can live at all without exerting this power at some points; and no man can live nobly, and to the highest purposes of his being, without exerting it constantly, at all points, and with absolute supremacy. And it is not enough to let them balance one another, or to play off one against another. The sovereign power within, the inmost self, the inscrutable soul, whose presence none can define, and yet all are conscious of, must be ready and able to say to each and all of them in its turn, "Thus far and no farther."

In the biographies of all persons eminent for character and achievement you will notice how they have striven to acquire perfectly this form of self-mastery, this power of denial. What ingenious devices and shrewd practices they have resorted to, to this end! In some ages, what fasts and penances and seclusions and all forms of asceticisms, and in all ages what vigorous efforts, what watchfulness, and what contrivances and habits of self-discipline, whereby they might be able with promptitude and effect to say *No* to any tendency that is getting too strong, and any desire that is too clamorous! And success in that is their salvation, the open secret of their success in their high aims, and the glory of their lives. They not only legislate for themselves as

to what they will do, and which of their faculties shall be exerted, and which of their tendencies shall be pushed, but also which of them shall be denied and held back. Not only to which of them they shall say, — the central self shall say, — "Yes," and "Advance, go in," but as much to which they shall say, imperatively, "No; halt, recede, be still." The veto stands next in importance to the initiative, and is equally indispensable for a good career and a well-governed life.

Secondly, the circumstances and events around us. These are very powerful, seemingly irresistible often. They claim to take full possession of a man, to carry him whither they will, and make of him what they will. They seem to say to him, We are a part of the irresistible order of nature; we move according to the eternal laws; we represent the forces of the universe; we come backed by the omnipotence of the Creator. What can you, poor, puny mortal, do in resistance to our overwhelming might? A pitiful speck of being as you are, an evanescent bubble on this vast sea of matter and force, what is there for you, but to drift whithersoever we may carry you, and sink where we drop you? But not so, thou majestic universe, bearing upon man as you do with all your infinite might in the events and circumstances around us, — not so! The soul in man, that mysterious essence, whose very existence you bring into question, is in its rightful province, and a splendid one too, is a match for you,

can resist you, set you aside, say *No* to you, and in the ethereal, God-like power it is endowed with, and with the humility of a little child, make good its audacious defiance.

The brave but wary seaman knows the tremendous power of an adverse wind, a power that nothing can withstand, — knows it and respects it, yet he is master of the situation. He can anchor in the roadstead, and look the very hurricane in the face, and let it blow. He will not budge. He can wait. That force will be spent before his will be. He will yet lay his course right along the pathway of the storm, and he does, and makes his voyage triumphantly. Or in another case he refuses to drift with it. He will move right on against the opposing force, and never stop a moment, nor furl his sails; he must beat, go zigzag, tediously, but he gets on, against it, and, if need be, he will make the entire Atlantic voyage without one favorable breeze, with hard struggles but no yielding, delayed but not defeated.

So in all human life. The power of circumstances must be respected, and dealt with valiantly but warily. The true man will accommodate himself to them, and yet refuse to drift with them; nay, will circumvent them, outwatch them and make them serve his purpose. They may delay him but not turn him back, discourage him but not pluck heart of hope out of him. They may be too strong for the moment, then he can wait. They may block his way like a wall, then

he will turn them. There are some things that they will not let him do, but there are as many things he will not let them do. If they shut up one path, he opens another. They may change his direction, but not stop his progress. They may change the form of his duty, but cannot hinder doing. They may combine to tempt and assail his integrity or purity, but if he say in God's name, "No!" they cannot touch it. The torture of the rack cannot wring it away from him, the fires of martyrdom cannot burn it out of him.

So great is the power of that something in one's inmost self. Soul, is it? Will, is it? We cannot get at it, but it is there. It is but a speck, and not even that; but a spark, and not so much as that. No scalpel lays it bare, no anatomy reveals it, it eludes the crucible and the microscope; but it is a something that can stand up and say, "No!" and all the things and forces of the visible universe must fall back, baffled and powerless before it. All men that live exercise this power in some degree, and some men, the noble and the saintly ones, how largely, how imperially, how gloriously! Verily the soul in man is a child of the Almighty God, in a sense that no other thing or creature is. Would that it better deserved its birthright, and exercised its high and almost divine prerogative.

Thirdly. It is most practical to consider the exercise of this veto-power in refusing the requests of other persons. There are always about

us those who ask us or propose to us to do things that we ought not, or had better not do. And such is the strength of the social tie, and so potent the influence of another's desire, that there is always a disposition to comply, and an amiable disposition it is in itself. But it is often very misleading, and sometimes fatal to honor and integrity, to purity and peace and every dear or sacred interest of life. Many a youth and many a man, not depraved, but simply weak and unestablished, has thus been led to his ruin, out of mere good-natured compliance and the difficulty of refusing a solicitation. Balancing between good and evil, with the promise and possibility of the best, he has gone to the bad, because he could not, or felt that he could not, say "No!" The dangerous tendencies that are in him, and that are in everybody, acquire tenfold power when reinforced by the importunity of a friendly companion to join him in giving way to them. That little off-hand suit, "Come along," coupled with the suggestion, "What 's the harm," or "Who will know it?" or "Just this once," or "Don't be a coward," we cannot tell how many it leads astray every day, initiates in the downward path, and that too when every instinct of the conscience, every sentiment of honor, every affection of their heart, and every hope of their lives, is breathing its protest, and would hold them back. But it is so hard to say "No!" to such appeals, and the friendly urgency overbears their scruples and carries them away.

If all those hesitating consents could now be recalled, those fatal compliances reversed, and it should be as if the rightful refusals had been spoken in place of them, what blessed results should we see. What uprisings from dishonored graves; what long processions from out of prison walls; what returning steps of fugitives and wanderers to the homes they have left desolate; what reappearances of disgraced men from the seclusions that hide their shame; what reëntering of blighted names on the roll of honorable and fair-famed men and women; what a healing of bleeding hearts and uplifting of bowed heads; what a turning back of a large portion of the tide of comfortless and ineffectual remorse that flows over the world! But, alas! it is too late! too late! The fatal assent cannot be withdrawn. That little word, the decisive, the saving word, cannot be spoken now. The dreadful tide rolls on, for it must.

But here comes the great army of the new generation, erect and firm-footed yet, with ranks unbroken. Shall that, too, be decimated by this miserable weakness of compliance, and for want of one brave word? God in heaven forbid it!

O friends, learn betimes to say "No!" when you know you ought to say it. Fear not the sneers of the evil-disposed, the corrupt, or the merely thoughtless, but fear rather the anguish and tears of those who love you, the stings of your conscience, and the displeasure of your God. Be prompt and strong to say "No!" when

you ought, and your better nature bids you, and so march on, through your career, in safety, honor, and peace.

And it is not only to the solicitations or the suggestions that would lead us in fatal directions, into enslaving vices, or blasting crimes, or the outright sacrifice of truth, honor, and purity that we need to exercise this great prerogative of downright refusal. In the thick of this our social city life, we have need to exercise it daily, and almost hourly, in respect to requests and invitations that have no bad intent, but are meant in courtesy and kindness, and that in other circumstances, and at other times, might be complied with, in all propriety. We need, on moral grounds, to guard with some jealousy our personal independence, and let nobody unduly or unseasonably invade it. We cannot afford to hold ourselves, our time, faculties, thoughts, or even sympathies entirely at the beck and call, even of the best people, or of the kindest-meaning friends. Only one's self can know his own exact position on any given day or hour, what he has to do, or had better do, what he has to think about, or what to engage his feelings, or to occupy his energies, or what purpose and aim claims him. He must therefore take care of himself. He should hold himself ready and firm to decline every request, from whomsoever it comes, that would use up the hours or the energies that he has consecrated to more important objects, or that would interfere with a duty or an

engagement; that would divert him from a serious aim, or break down a good rule or resolution. Also to decline solicitations for favors which sound principle forbids him to grant, or which in reasonable prudence he cannot grant, and which, therefore, no man has a right to expect of him.

But it is so hard to refuse people who ask things in kindness or in confidence. Yes, it is hard, and therefore it is that I am striving to put the duty of it on the highest ground of personal independence, and of moral right, and of self-respect. I enforce it, because, on account of the difficulty of it, it needs enforcing.

But it is ungracious; it will give offense and alienate friends. No, not often, not seriously, or only for a moment, or not persons whose opinions and feelings are entitled to any regard.

And here I should remark, that in the every-day refusals which we have occasion for, it is not necessary nor becoming to use always the abrupt, sharp, naked word of our text. There are occasions on which to use that very word with all the emphasis of rebuke, or even of indignation, that our lips can give it. But generally there may be found terms in which to make a refusal as polite and courteous as a consent. And a Christian, and a gentleman or lady, will prefer those terms when they are fitting. It is not necessary to be rude or to insult anybody.

Now and then a person may be so ill-bred or so inconsiderate as to reject your negative, and

importune you, and demand your reasons, and insist on an argument. You may bear that awhile in silence or courteous evasion; but you may sometimes be brought to a point at which your self-respect will put on an air that shall say gently, yet unanswerably, "Stand off; you presume too far, you trespass on my personality; you must take for granted my reasons are sufficient, and leave me to be the sole judge of them."

That high independence which never hesitates to say "No!" whenever and to whomsoever it should be said, commands respect. It is a chief element of all nobleness and strength of character. It is essential to feminine dignity, and to the highest manhood. It makes you worth seeking, and causes your refusals to be better taken than the loose assents of those facile persons who from sheer weakness in the fibre and the making up of their character can never say "No," or say it as if guilty of an offense and fearful of your displeasure.

Such are the functions, and such the sphere of the veto-power in the human constitution. We must maintain it with vigor at several points, maintain it and exercise it against the inordinate demands of our own appetites and passions, and against the things, events, circumstances, that set themselves, as obstacles, temptations, or allurements, against our just aims, our best aspirations, and our abiding interests. Exercise it towards all persons whatsoever, who, wickedly

or innocently, in malice or in kindness, demand or propose or hint to you anything that would lead you one step towards the slightest breach of your veracity, fidelity, or integrity, or involve you in any course or act of deception, or stain your purity, or sully your good name, or commit you to any folly, or lead to the neglect of a duty or the breaking of a promise, or a waste of time, or an outrage of your best affections, or an interruption of any serious purpose in life. To all such solicitations be ready with a brave, instant, and inflexible "No!"

So maintain and strengthen your soul's self-sovereignty, from early childhood to latest manhood. So build up the fabric of a manly and heroic character, and secure the beauty and felicity of a well-ordered life. So keep distinct and bright the divine image in which you were made, secure the franchise of God's kingdom for here and for hereafter, and give the world assurance of a man.

1872.

XXII.

THE MIRACLE OF CANA.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. . . . And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. — *John* ii. 1, 2.

IT can never be known what were the literal physical and chemical facts underlying this little story of the water changed into wine. How to reconcile the acknowledged inviolability of the natural laws with the singular power or mysterious influence ascribed to Jesus in the (so-called) miraculous narratives of the New Testament, is a question earnestly and ingeniously discussed by those persons to whose minds the miracles, as such, are vitally connected with the foundations of the Christian faith. As I am not of that number, I pass the question by now, as usual, as being impossible to answer and unprofitable to discuss.

Almost any one, however, of these narratives, without our determining how far the mythic element, or how far literal fact prevails in it, presents some moral feature that is suggestive of spiritual wisdom, sometimes beautiful and precious.

We do not know anything about the conflict or concord between the chemical laws and the spiritual laws, through which, as the story relates, the insipid and tasteless water was changed into the sparkling and generous liquor which in Scripture phrase, "Maketh glad the heart of man." But we do know that there are presences, there are influences in the world, possessing a mysterious, and, if you will, a miraculousp ower, to transform things common and homely into things rare and beautiful, exalt flatness into exhilaration, transmute the dull dross into the shining gold of life, turn water into wine.

We must not scrutinize too closely or press too far the contrast, so much insisted on in these days, between water and wine, as to the relative value and healthfulness of the two, but simply fall in with the ancient metaphor, and take one as the rhetorical type of what is flat and common, and the other as the type of what is costly and delicious and vivifying.

Such transforming and transfiguring influences are as numerous and various as the higher faculties of the human soul. I suppose such influences were never centred in any person on earth so largely as in Jesus of Nazareth, and we may be sure that his presence there, at the mar riage in Cana, whether He furnished wine or not, whether He did any noticeable act or not, wrought powerfully to change and exalt the scene and occasion, brought in a finer exhilaration, and a sweeter cheer, infused a deeper if a solemn joy,

and through the consciousness of the bridal pair, and of every guest, gave a new significance and a holier beauty to the marriage rite, so that it was no mere mating of the sexes, no vulgar contract for worldly convenience, but a mystery, a sacrament, and the fairest earthly type of the heavenly blessedness.

It will help us in appreciating this transforming power of Jesus, to observe how, within our constant experience, the same power is exercised in a measure by other persons, by the influence of gifts and attributes like his in kind but different in degree, or different from his, yet to be ranked among the great transforming powers of humanity.

The earth is covered all over with grand and beautiful sceneries, which men love to look upon and find themselves lifted up, softened, strengthened, soothed, purified, by the healthful and inspiring influences of outward nature. But into whatever scenes a profound human interest has come, how greatly is the charm deepened, and the influence heightened, and that, too, even though the scenes in their visible aspects be tame and unattractive.

If there is a spot of earth that is sufficient unto itself, and in which the omnipotence of the Creator is so conspicuously manifested that the intrusion of a human presence, or the thought of anything that man is or can do, must be lost sight of as a trivial accident, or an impertinence, it is Switzerland, with its awful heights and lovely

vales and lakes, the feebleness of man dwindling into nothingness amid such majestic presences; and yet the stories of Tell and Winkelried, and their companions, of their brave deeds and endurances and sacrifices for liberty and right, add a new grandeur and loveliness to what is grand or lovely there, bringing a new and touching charm, as all travelers know so well. The moral attributes of God, even as reflected in the humblest child that bears his image, add a new and finer glory to the most stupendous works of his Almighty hand.

The lake country of England, with its felicitous combinations of rugged hill and smiling valley, and wood and water, is the delight of its thousands of pilgrims who stop to nestle awhile in its beautiful lap, or only wind along in a single day's journey; yet it was little known, deemed common, and was neglected, until men and women of high character and intellect made it their abode, and the poets, especially Wordsworth, threw over it the spell of their genius, invested the region with the wonder-working charm of a tender human interest, and a lofty spiritual interest, casting a delicious glamour over the eyes of visitors that refines, exalts, idealizes the entire scenery. The presence of soul awakening soul, and interfusing itself with the aspects of nature, has been the wonder-worker here.

Scotland is a rough, homely country, nothing specially grand or lovely in its natural aspects, and its people continued rude and semi-barba-

rous longer than their neighbors. A century ago it was despised as rude and uninviting by people of culture. Few went there who could help it. Now it has become as classic and fascinating as any land in Europe. Two men, especially, have wrought the change — Burns and Scott. The one by his tender yet manly fellow-feeling with the poor, the oppressed, the lowly, helping them to erect themselves in a courageous and self-respecting manhood; the other by his genial sympathy with whatever had been brave, generous, chivalrous and charming in the old history or the new life of the people. They diffused their spiritual presence over the whole land, and peopled hill and dale, and castle and cottage, wild moor and city street, with forms of strong, heroic, or beautiful life, historical or imaginary, no matter which; of homely and coarse life often, yet healthful, real, intensely human; and such life, wherever it is vividly conceived and pictured, has a transforming power over nature. And now all over the land there are scenes of birth and of burial, scenes of bold adventure, of tragic pathos, of dire conflict, of religious fortitude, and of fervid faithful love, that have a strange spell to attract the traveler's steps, scarcely less than that of towering Alps or castled Rhine, or the galleries of Dresden and Florence. Humanity is the mysterious power that over all the face of inanimate nature turns the water into wine, to the contemplative soul.

Even narrow, grimy streets and close courts in

London city or Edinburgh old town, when you think of the men of intellectual might, or of brave and beautiful character, whom you know of in history, in biography, who dwelt there once, and walked those pavements, and repose in that dust, and whose influence has reached even you in a far land, and fired your imagination, stirred your reverence or love, and touched your life to finer issues. Those scenes, though nature has not distinguished them, and man may have defiled them, become to you almost hallowed ground.

Sometimes man produces material works that seem to surpass himself. When he has reared some immense and gorgeous structure, it seems as if he, the puny creature, had better retire from it and leave it to make its own impression of grandeur and beauty upon the spectator's mind, of as little consequence, and as little missed, as the coral-worm withdrawing from the strong island he has built up from the floor of the sea. Yet when you have entered a cathedral at Cologne, at Strasburg, or elsewhere, and listened to the solemn tones of the great organ, and looked aloft and around with awe at the vastness, and delight at the beauty, and felt that it is a fit temple for the infinite God, you shall find, perhaps, that what has touched the deepest place in your soul has been the sight of some poor, worn old woman, or some simple, hard-working peasant girl, bowing in fervent, confiding devotion at some side-altar, and then rising and taking up her staff or basket and going forth again to her

hard lot, in poverty and rags it may be, yet with the radiance of a new light from heaven on her face and new courage in her weary steps. Human faith and piety humbly communing with the infinite Father, a more sublime and touching spectacle moving you, exalting you more than any wonders of art, or any magnificence in wood and stone. One humble human soul, tender and true, drawn close to its God, and taking hold of the powers of the world to come, is a greater thing than any temple that is built for it, and imparts to that temple itself the chief element of its majesty, its beauty, its sanctity.

Observe that narrow strip of Syrian territory along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Nature had set no special seal of favoritism upon it, no mark of preference over the land of Moab beyond, or of Egypt below. But what a lustre there is upon it! God had been there, and always in his strength and beauty, there as everywhere. He had furrowed out the channel of the Jordan, pitched the slopes of Tabor, and carved the cliffs of Zion, garnered up his waters in the Sea of Galilee, and planted his cedars on the sides of Lebanon, his roses in Sharon, and his olive-trees in the garden-fields of Judæa, with all the abundant tokens of power and love manifested in the forces of nature. Yet it was but common ground, a little unnoticeable patch of the earth-wide garden of the Lord.

But when its Creator had manifested there, in an eminent degree, his own higher moral attri-

butes through the great inspired souls that He sent upon the scene, especially through that one preëminent man, the man of men, the very Son of Man, and thereby the Son of God, the spiritual lord and king of men, when He had appeared in that land, and walked its roads, and sailed upon its waters, and passed through its city streets, and entered its dwellings, and rested at its way-side wells, and uttered his prayers on its lonely hill-sides and in its dewy gardens, and lived there his spotless and beneficent life, and delivered his sweet and lofty messages of truth and love, and the divine tenderness and mercy, and the immortal hope, and sealed it all with the free surrender of his life, then it was no longer common ground. Then it became to the heart of the world, and in its speech, the Holy Land. The very airs that swept over it became, as it were, the breath of God's Holy Spirit. The sound of divine voices has lingered on its hill-tops and along its valleys. It became what prophet and psalmist, with a patriot's partial, boastful love, had called it long before, "A land, the glory of all lands, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." Myriads of pilgrim feet have hurried toilsomely across Europe to press that sacred soil and look upon the spots that had known that presence. And in the uttermost parts of the earth, devout and loyal souls have almost literally, like Daniel in his captivity at Babylon, kneeled for their daily prayers at the windows of their chambers that faced towards

Jerusalem. Verily the little wonder wrought at the marriage in Cana is but a poor, faint type, though a beautiful one, of the transforming and transfiguring influence of a great and beautiful personality.

And for all those, in countless numbers, through the Christian centuries, who might not look upon the scenes which his bodily presence had hallowed, nor even picture them, nor visit them in imagination, but who yet have found that He comes hither to them as He promised, and becomes a spiritual presence to them wherever they dwell, and they seem to catch the look of sympathy in his benignant face, to feel his hand taking their hands, to lead and uphold them, and to hear his words and tones, full of heavenly pity and forgiveness, words telling of the Father's love and the heavenly mansions, words of glorious truth and kindly warning love and dear encouragement and comfort, proclaiming the soul's victory over sin and death and the grave, and the kingdom of heaven coming, and come, — they, the countless throng of his trusting and affectionate disciples, have found a new heaven and a new earth, wherever that mystic presence comes. It lights up the landscape of their life with a glory from a higher source than the sun, clothes it with a beauty that is not in it, but in the inner eye that looks upon it, and in the Father's smile that invests it, infuses new zest into their pleasures, a strange new soothing into their pains and griefs, reveals a look of brotherhood in all human

faces, makes the hand-grasp of friendship more cordial, and the glance of love warmer and holier, sets the song of triumph on dying lips, and adorns the very grave with flowers.

And not only He, the chief transmuter, as being the grandest presence, the largest, sweetest, divinest soul, but also all those among men and women who have lived in his light and shared his Spirit, whencesoever they consciously or unconsciously derived it, they also in their degree change and glorify the scenes and circles in which they move. Good men and women, such as we all have known, perhaps, in the nearest relationships, the blameless and self-governed, the upright and faithful and true, affectionate and kindly, sages without the pretension, and saints without the title, our own best beloved and revered ones, it may be, when they are gone, — and alas, we hardly ever see them most truly and in full light till they are gone, — when they are gone we notice how the streets and paths that witnessed their daily walk have taken on a new aspect from their presence; how their presence still hovers over the fields they tilled and the gardens they trimmed; how their image, reverend or beautiful, lingers and brightens in the house, the room, the chair they most occupied; how their voices are heard there and their words remembered; the perishable things wrought by their hands become sacred relics; the books worn by their reading are full of meanings that their authors never put into them. The aroma of what

was sweet and pure in their spirit, or of what was manly and noble in their lives, is diffused all over the things they handled and the places they frequented; their death becomes a spiritual coronation scene, and their tombs consecrated shrines at which to bow down in tender recollection, in meditation and prayer. It is such as these that redeem for us the baldness and material hardness of the earthly lot, exalt things common, refine things coarse, and at the varied banquet of life sweeten the daily bread and turn the water into wine.

But without reference to persons or personalities we may say, in the most general terms, that wherever the spirit and temper of Jesus Christ, the most truly human, and therefore the most divine, finds a place among men, it changes and renews the aspect, the significance, and the capabilities of the world, especially his chief characteristic — love. Love is the great miracle-worker in this world. Love brings down fire from heaven, to put light and warmth and joy into this cold climate of our earthiness and arctic selfishness. Love weaves threads of gold into the dullest web of earthly life, and makes it shine as though woven in heavenly looms. It draws and knits heart to heart in that disinterestedness and self-oblivion which is holier and diviner than it knows. It consecrates the marriage bond, transfigures the poorest dwelling — be it a cave in the rocks or a lodge in the wilderness — into a very palace for the soul, carpeting its cold floors

and upholstering its bare walls with sanctities and sweetnesses and contentments of an affectionate and peaceful home life. It sets the baldest prose of life to sweetest melody, and makes every man and woman and child a true poet in heart, though they be none with the pen. Love lightens all burdens, smooths all roughnesses, makes hardship easy, and converts labor into play. It hangs the inner chambers of imagery with pictures and visions of the absent, and dear and sacred memories of the dead. It brings a sufficient sunshine into the condition which no worldly prosperity brightens ; and, looking up into the heavenly Father's face, beholds there, in the light of its own exceeding beauty and joy, the expression of an infinite tenderness and affection, and learns to give back love for love, in filial submission, obedience, and trust.

I have thus tried to bring to view those rich experiences of life which are typified by the miracle of Cana.

And now, friends, let us seek to have this beautiful miracle wrought for us and in us, all along our life journey. Who or what shall provide for us the mystic wine to gladden our life-feast, and transmute to our hands, and transfigure for our eyes, this hard material world and make it a soul's world, soft to our tread, and bright with the spiritual radiance ? What persons of the dead or the living, what circumstances, what power, shall work for us this so wonderful yet so common miracle, the miracle that repeats itself and

renews itself every day, all over the world? Let us think who, or what, or where, and go seek it more diligently than gold, and hold it more precious than rubies. Wherever that stream flows from beneath the throne of God, let us go bathe in it day by day. Wherever for us that sunshine streams out of heaven, let us go bask in it. Wherever that power is exercised, let us go sit all day within the sweep of its transforming influence.

And if, by any gift or grace of God, or any visitings of the Holy Spirit, we might become partakers of that wonder-working power; if we might be such, and so live as to make the world more beautiful and happy for some that live in it with us, put some sweetness here and there into a bitter cup, lead some footsteps in paths that shine with the beauty of holiness, send some sunshine into the dark places, make it to some a dear boon and an abiding joy that we and they have had our walk together here; if we can so, in any manner, help to transfigure the world for one another, — oh, that is the Christ-like life and influence that repeats and infinitely transcends the miracle of Cana! That is the highest function and the sweetest fruit of existence. That is the ministry of angels, and a working together with God.

1872.

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

INTRODUCTORY I. AND II.,

TWO SERMONS PREACHED AT THE FIRST CHURCH IN ROXBURY ON THE MORNING AND AFTERNOON OF JULY 11, 1830, THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE PREACHER'S ORDINATION,

AND THE

ORDAINING ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

ORDINATION OF THE REV. JOHN GRAHAM BROOKS,

AS COLLEAGUE OF THE PREACHER,

Sunday, October 10, 1875.

APPENDIX.

INTRODUCTORY I.

Feed the flock of God. — 1 *Peter* v. 2

In coming before you, my hearers, for the first time in this new relation, I feel that I need not ask your forbearance if I depart somewhat from the ordinary range of the topics of the pulpit. I cannot speak to-day of other subjects than those which have been lately engrossing and directing my every thought and emotion.

The peculiarity of the occasion and the authority of custom must excuse me if I am very personal and say much of myself, — the feelings and thoughts, the hopes and fears and purposes, that come thronging into this passing era, — that must be of some interest to you, and are of all-absorbing interest and importance to me. The fervent prayer, the solemn charge, the fraternal welcome, have been here offered, and are passed. Duties, responsibilities, have become realities, and fill the mind with mingled anticipations and fix it upon the future.

Of these duties I would now speak with simplicity and directness, that I may both fill my own mind with a clear and deep sense of them, and give you my views of the relation that has begun between us, and of its mutual obligations.

And first, the public duties of the pulpit.

It is the fortune of those who enter this profession at this day to have fallen upon times when the professional standard is very high around them. Many who occupy our holy places are ornaments and shining lights, not only of the church, but of the country and the world. The pulpit has been growing in respectability, eloquence, and effectiveness; our churches have been thronged as no other places are; accordingly the standard is raised high, and is rising. Heavy and growing claims are laid upon the clergy. The wise, the cultivated, the intellectual, encouraged by these examples around them of what the pulpit may do, are beginning to look to it for instruction and incitement, and to think that it does not fully accomplish its legitimate purposes if it fail and come short of this.

This state of things calls for a corresponding power and exertion on the part of the clergy to meet the demand. Stores of learning, a fund of thought, devoted and untiring industry are required, and he who has them not, and *is not in a way to acquire them*, is behind his time; he has mistaken his place and calling, — he is not wanted. If he does not task every faculty, and stretch every nerve, and fill up life with labor, he very soon finds himself behindhand in the race; his brethren and the world have got before him, and he is forsaken and forgotten.

Do not suppose that I have been preparing the way for the very common and very disagreeable round of complaints and lamentations about the labors and difficulties of the profession. I am not going to offend your understanding and sense of propriety by setting forth and magnifying the peculiar difficulties of my calling, by recounting its sacrifices and trials,

and taxing your sympathies in their behalf. I know not how this came to be the peculiar weakness of the clergy.

The intellectual industry and standing and progress demanded of the clergy, in this age and in this region, I regard as the glory of the profession, and I rejoice in them. I rejoice soberly and anxiously, but deeply and sincerely. To be required by circumstances to labor hard in an elevated cause for noble objects is a privilege and a blessing. It is an incitement to move a man to live and act as becomes his nature and faculties and accountableness. Men seldom do much more than they are required by some circumstances of their condition to do, and he for whom the circumstances are strong and pressing is therein blest above the ordinary lot.

He who owes many and high duties to others, and performs them faithfully, and so does good to others, does a greater good to himself; and that is a happy profession that is filled with such duties and is hedged about with a strong necessity to perform them. That is an unfortunate man who has no pressing inducement to live other than a life of worthless ease. That is an unhappy situation which permits one to rust out his powers in sloth and indifference. I pity him, whatever his employment, who does not find something in it to urge him to do with all his might what his hands find to do.

A minister of the gospel, in these times, has no right to be idle and negligent, and *he ought not to be suffered to be so.* He has no right to pass off the dull, desultory, and commonplace production of an indolent hour when the faithful labor of a week is needed and called for, and *he ought not to be suffered to do so.* He has no right so to spend his time, and

employ his faculties, and exercise his function, that year after year shall go by and he remain intellectually stationary, unimproved and unimproving, and *he ought not to be suffered to do so.*

Such is my view of ministerial duty, as respects the pulpit, and I care not how far I commit myself on this point. I care not how high I place the standard of duty, or how publicly I do it, or how long my words are remembered.

Do not think I say this presumptuously, as if no indulgence were needed or asked for. Very far from it. Much indulgence is needed, constantly, kindly, and most charitably. You cannot expect in the young the intellectual fruits of age ; you cannot expect to see in all the rare powers of the few great ones ; you cannot forbid all relaxation ; you cannot expect the same things in sickness and in health ; you cannot expect that the regular weekly productions of your minister shall bear comparison with the one or two choice ones picked from a thousand, which the stranger brings to you ; you cannot expect more than one duty to be done at a time. These things you cannot require. But you may and ought to demand reasonable evidence of constant industry, faithful effort, and devotedness. This you may justly require, and so far and so long as I am concerned, for the sake of my own self-improvement and self-satisfaction and true happiness, I hope you always will require it and rigidly insist upon it.

I know that I have been stating and justifying principles that, if strictly followed, would make the clerical office a very perilous one, — not to be lightly undertaken or easily discharged. But that soldier is not fit for the field who sees nothing inviting in the foremost post of peril, and he is no fit soldier of the

cross who covets a light armor and an easy service, who looks repiningly on hardship and shrinks from hazardous responsibilities.

But while I state what I think advantageous and happy in the present general state of public taste and requisition with regard to the pulpit, I ought not to forget or pass by the *dangers* which attend such a state of things. These are many and fearful, — and some among us are beginning to anticipate and lament their symptoms and approach.

There is danger that sermons shall become orations, the preacher a pageant and an exhibition, the gospel a mere text and motto-book. There is danger that liberality in religion shall become licentiousness. The popular mind grows fastidious, the popular ear grows delicate, and religion is almost too rude for it. This vice must not be spoken ill of, because it is fashionable, and grows out of the state of society; that gross sin must not be condemned, because there are some about who have been suspected of it; some virtues must not be much insisted on, because the place is not very remarkable for that virtue. The preacher must not be over-earnest in the cause of religion, lest he seem to be too orthodox; and some truths must not be too much urged, because they have grown homely and old-fashioned and tame.

There is danger that the strong and solemn words of truth and soberness be sacrificed to graces of style and newness and richness of imagery. There is danger that the fervors of a holy religion be quenched in the cold dews of Castalia, and the inspiration of the Muses, instead of the Spirit of God, be invoked on the minister of the gospel and the altar of the sanctuary, and so the pulpit shut out its Master with the oracles of false gods, — the pulpit, that should be the

unbiased expounder of the Christian faith, the fearless and unyielding champion of an unqualified purity, a fervent piety, and a lofty, uncompromising morality, — yield the liberty of Christ, bend and truckle to the changes of fashion, and cater to public taste; such are some of the dangers of the times. There is an alarming tendency in the community to fall into them, and the clergy are but too ready to follow. We have an undoubted right to change the church into a playhouse or place of declamation; but call it no longer the temple of the Most High, the sanctuary, the gate of heaven; mingle not the sacredness of prayer with its exhibitions, call not its ministers the ministers of Jesus of Nazareth, call not the Sabbath the Sabbath of the Lord.

I do not make these remarks to justify a barren, narrow, exclusive sort of preaching, as if there must be no images or allusions or trains of thought that cannot be borrowed from the Bible. That is a bigoted and indolent reverence for the Bible which leaves no liberty to the powers and resources of the mind. The waters of pure religion, that flow forth from the throne of God to enrich and beautify and sanctify the world, come in no single channel. The Bible, the revelation of Christ, is one and a most full and glorious one, but not the only one. Nature, the holy works of God, the earth and the heavens, with all that is beautiful and grand, gentle and solemn, in them; history, with its instructions and warnings and encouragements; Providence, with its awakenings and directings; the pure, spontaneous sentiments of our own bosoms, — all these, equally divine and heavenly, lend their streams to quicken and nurture within us a spirit that makes us religious and leads us to God and felicity.

Let him, then, who would be a faithful and effective minister of religion, as far as in him lies, seek power and beauty and interest from all the sources that God has opened to the eye of a free mind, — from the heavens and the earth, from within, from the past, the passing, and the future, — only let the gospel of Christ, with the spirit that breathes and the truth that speaks from its pages, overshadow and possess him, and be to him as an ark of the Lord, to guide and concentrate and hallow the whole.

Perhaps, in assuming a share of the responsibilities of this pulpit, I may be expected to declare more particularly my intentions as to the manner of discharging those responsibilities.

In the first place, this is an age of sects. The lines are drawn with definiteness. Christians take sides, and know their men and their standard. Parties are divided off and fenced in, organized and counted to a decimal. Whether this state of things is a desirable and happy one I will not now undertake to decide. It would be idle to do so. But it does exist. It is matter of fact, and likely to continue so. And while this state of things exists, — and indeed I believe in any state of things, — a society has a right to know, so far as it desires to know, the tone of theology and the leading opinions of its minister, and he ought not to conceal or withhold them whenever an expression of them seems to be called for or needed.

If asked what course I expect to pursue with respect to parties and doctrines, I can say but little more in reply than to assert my own absolute and unqualified personal independence.

I come from an institution which I love and venerate as the hallowed abode of free minds and untram-

meled opinion, where no creeds are imposed and no doctrinal pledges are offered or asked for or tolerated. I am yet linked with no sect, responsible for none of their opinions and measures. My opinions, such as they are, or such as they may hereafter be, I hold myself ready whenever occasion may demand it to assert, and, so far as I am able, to defend and maintain. I am responsible to no party for them, and no party is responsible for the doctrines which I may hold. I am free to qualify or change or renounce them, but all in my own single name.

Neither am I answerable to you for my opinions, and I am sure you would not have it so. Neither are any of you answerable to me, and I would not have it so. This much only can be said: If ever my preaching shall seem to be either heresy or superstition to you, and shall thus become unacceptable and unprofitable, the course is very plain, — the connection does not answer the purposes of such a connection, and should be dissolved, and that at once and of course, without results of councils or adjudications of courts.

I shall associate with my brethren on the principles on which all men and all animate beings associate, with those with whom I have most sympathy in sentiment and feeling; and if such association puts a party name upon me, be it Unitarian or Socinian or Liberal, I am willing to take it and bear it with its honor and its odium.

But with any sect, as such, banded and herded together, and bound all to coöperate in the schemes and doings of the body politic, for right and for wrong, for better and for worse, — such sects there are, and with them, as such, I desire no communion. They abridge individual freedom, and are unworthy

of Christianity, and false to its spirit, and fatal to its ends.

I see no objection to names and titles by which to distinguish those who differ from each other in their views of Christianity, any more than those who differ in politics or philosophy, or anything about which honest men disagree. It is the right use and natural application of words. I see nothing shocking or unchristian in using or assuming such names, and it is idle to think of abolishing them. Only let every individual keep sacred his individual freedom, and not regard himself as responsible for and obliged to maintain all the opinions and doings of those who bear the same general appellation, and that appellation will do no harm. Parties there are, and must be, in everything and about everything on which men's minds act freely and decide for themselves, and I am not surprised or disgusted or grieved to find them in religion, designated by their convenient distinctive names. I see the dangers of them, but I see also the necessity of them, — how they spring from the nature of things and the condition of man. If there be a sect in Christendom, — no, I will not call it a sect, for that name has become unpopular and hateful, — if there be a class or body of men drawn together and held together by the unbiased sympathies and broad charities of free and honest minds and hearts, loving and seeking the truth, praying and striving together for its fruits, all cheering and helping each other without restraint or denunciation or calling to account, — if there be such a party in Christendom, I pray God to make me a worthy member of it. But a party so perfect I suppose there is not. And yet if there be one that professes to make these principles its standard, and seems to be laboring and hoping to

arrive at such a standard, and is likely to do so, and thus to become the possessor and promoter of the glorious liberty of the gospel, — if there be such a party, then I desire to be one of it, and if it have a name, I am ready to take its name.

To whatever party or association of men I may ever be drawn by sympathy and inclination or a sense of duty, — and I hope this matter may be intrusted to my own judgment and taste only, — let it be understood I am not to sound its trumpet and fight its battles in this place. I abhor controversy in the pulpit. Except in extreme cases it should not be entered upon or tolerated to the slightest degree. Its harsh tones shall never fill and profane this house, so long and so far as its services are under my influence and control. Christianity, its spirit and purport, should indeed be understood by all who profess it. Its truth may and should be set forth and illustrated, and this, if done at all, must of course be done according to the views of the preacher. But those views should never be set forth and maintained as the appointed and approved system of any sect, or as opposed to and conflicting with the doctrines of any other sect. I rejoice and am thankful that there seems to be here no shadow of necessity or taste for a disputatious or dogmatical sort of preaching.

It would be idle and ill-timed to lay down any plan that I intend to pursue with respect to the public services of this place. I have, of course, some present thoughts and intentions upon the subject, but how can I know but they may be changed in a week? All plans formed to walk by in future untried scenes are but dreams. The traveler, when he starts, may anticipate in fancy all the journey that is before him, but how soon do the new scenery, the new difficulties and

pleasures and companions of the way, change again and again his feelings and thoughts till he forgets those with which he set out.

I have said what I had to say of the public services of the profession; perhaps I should say something here of the corresponding obligations of a people. I mean the duty of attending upon those services. On this subject I have not much to say now, and I do not believe I ever shall have. My present views I would now give plainly and once for all. I think the people of this community are under strong and solemn obligations to attend public worship, habitually and upon principle. But let me not be misunderstood; I would put this obligation upon its true and right ground and confine it to that.

In the first place it should not be put on the ground that it is a reciprocal duty owed to the minister personally. The minister personally is not entitled to any better attendance and attention than he can command by the interest and value of his services. If he fail to give pleasure or profit it is his own fault or his misfortune, and it is no more right in his case than in that of other men that the people should be required to suffer for it. In whatever degree he fails to interest his people, in that same degree they are at liberty, so far as he is concerned, to neglect his services. This is an age when no class of men can command notice and regard on any other ground than their merit. It must indeed be most disheartening, withering, to be thus forsaken: the excitement of the profession must be lost, the labors of the study and the pulpit become a miserable and forced drudgery, — the heartless fulfillment of a contract, a hard dull service done for wages, — but still he cannot complain. He is on the same footing with the rest of the

world. He is treated according to the universal law of human desert and reward. He has either mistaken his calling or been unfaithful to it, and in either case his sorrows and his consolations must be silent — with himself and his God. A people may have indulgent feelings towards him and be influenced by them, and therein act generously and amiably, but it can hardly be called a ground of duty.

But I have taken the obligation from this ground that I may put it on another, a firmer and less fluctuating one. You do not owe it to your minister. No, the obligation is infinitely broader and deeper and stronger; you owe it to the community as benevolent men and good citizens; you owe it to your children as wise and faithful parents; you owe it to all the generations that shall succeed you.

It seems to be well determined by the original appointment of God, by the physical constitution of man, and by long and general usage, that one day in seven of rest from labor is needful and proper, and it does not appear likely that this day of rest will ever be given up *as such*. Now this being the case, Christianity asks that this day be given to her and her institutions. She desires to hallow its rest by her own spirit of calm and holy repose, and in much of the world she has done so, but nowhere else so much as in New England, and I ask if in doing so she has not done infinite good to New England? I believe that but for the institutions of religion this weekly day of rest would be a most dangerous day, fatal to public morals and peace, — a weekly returning evil, given up to indolence and of course to folly, dissipation, riot, and crime. But Christianity, under the pious guardianship of our fathers, has sanctified the day and made it one of holy peace and serenity: by the

power of fashion and habit she has brought to her own temple and filled with her own meditations thousands and tens of thousands for whom every Sabbath would otherwise have been not a Sabbath to the Lord, but a step of fearful progress in ways of folly and vice. I believe I do not exaggerate. I am sure that the public services of the Sabbath, unimportant as many may think them, are one of the leading and effective causes of the comparatively high moral character which New England has always sustained. They have preserved the Sabbath and made it a blessing, and so saved the community from infinite degradation. This is matter of fact and calculation. The politician and the man of practical thought may estimate it, and see it as well as the theologian; you may look back and you see it — look abroad and you feel it.

Thus much has the observance of this day effected hitherto; and now the Sabbath, with its dangers and hopes and all its influences for good and for evil, — the Sabbath so far as it concerns our own community and our children, — has passed into our hands. We may cherish and increase its sacredness, or by our neglect we may lessen and destroy it. The influence of every individual is great in this respect, not only on those about him, but especially on those who shall come after him, who will reverence his good example or justify themselves by his bad one.

The power of habit and fashion are incalculably great. According to the turn which you give to these, your houses of worship will be filled or forsaken by the next generation. As you by your example and precept may direct, your children and your children's children shall, from week to week, come and worship here in soberness, or else be abroad in the ways and

the haunts which you know are full of dangers. I would ask every thinking man if it is not so: and if, as a citizen, a neighbor, a father, or as sustaining any relation that gives him any influence over the mind or morals of any human being, he does not feel a great and solemn responsibility in this respect upon him. This is the ground on which I put the duty of attending public worship. I urge it, not as a matter of inexplicable authority, not as a matter of feeling to the minister, but as a most excellent and useful institution linked vitally with the best interests of this community; a strong guardian of the public morals; the expounder and remembrancer of religious truths that God gave to us in mercy. In the name, then, of true and pure religion, in the name of good order and good morals, in behalf of your children and their children, as Christians and good citizens and good parents, I commend that duty to your deliberate consideration, and I fear not to leave the decision to fair and sober-minded men.

Finally, brethren, so long as we shall meet together here to worship God, may it be in mutual charity and Christian love. May our minds be instructed and edified; may our hearts be warmed with a holy spirit, and set more and more on things heavenly and eternal. May not our preaching be vain; may not your faith be vain; but all endeavoring together to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, may we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

There are other more private duties of the pastoral relation, too important and interesting to pass unnoticed on this occasion, but they must be deferred to the afternoon.

INTRODUCTORY II.

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. — 1 *Tim.* iv. 15.

I HAVE spoken of some of the public duties of the pastoral relation. I must again crave your indulgence towards the personality, it may be egotism, which on this occasion I know not how to avoid. There are other duties of a more private and humble nature, quietly performed and little noticed, but which involve little less responsibility, and are attended with little less labor and anxiety and satisfaction. The work of the minister is but half done when he has led the devotions of the temple and dispensed its public instructions. He does injustice to his office who limits its influence and benefits to the pulpit. The Christian religion presents so many varied aspects, bears in so many points upon human life and character, and is fitted to touch and move in such infinite variety and extent of influence the keys of the heart and the faculties of the mind, — that the pulpit, the place of public harangue, with all its legitimate freedom and directness, cannot compass it. Christianity cannot be all preached. Its truths, its duties, its sanctions and admonitions may all be declared in the public assembly, but its spirit cannot all be imparted or felt there. Oh, no. It must go and sit at the side of the sick, and in its still voice teach its beautiful lessons of patience and trust. It must go in the last hour and

lend its heavenly peace and brighten the faith and the hopes of the dying. It must go to the lone home of the mourner and help his vision to discern a Father's hand of mercy and love figured forth in the dark cloud that is passing over his dwelling. It must draw the child to its arms and breathe its guiding spirit into his trusting ear, and make him love, with his young, confiding heart, what is holy and good. It must go to the abode of want and distress, and there, in the scene of it, teach the bowed down and desponding submission and confidence and hope towards God. These are the private errands, the unseen and unreported doings of our holy religion. They are accomplished in the still scenes and familiar intercourse of our homes; the worship and instruction of the Sabbath does not reach them; these are too distant, too general, too formal. I would not undervalue social public worship. I sincerely believe that it is essential to the preservation of Christianity among us, and essential to the well-being of this community. But it is not all. With the ancient Hebrews there was no place where the offering might ascend acceptably, and holy hands be lifted up to God, but the tabernacle, where the ark was set up. This was a wise appointment; for the people were ever inclined to idolatry, and, if left to worship where and how they pleased, would speedily have raised up false gods to themselves. But now we know but one God, the Father. The acceptable offering is the silent aspirations of a devout and faithful heart, and whereso-ever these burn and ascend, there is a holy place,— the Christian's Zion, — and there the Spirit of the Lord cometh down. This consecrated altar is not the only one, I trust, where our religion reveals her spirit, and warms and quickens ours, and lifts us to God in

holy thoughts and holy offices. Oh, there are holier places than the church, — places hallowed by the moving events of Providence, hallowed by the sacred relations of life, hallowed by the endearments and sympathies, the joys and sorrows, of our homes. Our religion does not set up its public spectacle to be gazed at for a little hour, and then left and forgotten as if it could do no more for us. She comes here to utter her truths and sanctions, to show us her ways and whither they lead; she does this to make herself known, to command our convictions and move our affections; and then she desires to go forth with us to our homes and be a companion, a helper, a guide to our spirits. There she would give her coloring to the events that befall us; she would give her tone to the feelings that come up within us; she would stay with us and keep us from all evil, from sin, disquietude, and despondence: she would give us all that is good, — purity and uprightness of life, holiness, hope, felicity. She would call to her aid all the dealings of God, and so sanctify and bless them that all shall work together for good and for joy; she would mingle herself with the tender and amiable affections of home; she consecrates with her mild sanctity the loves of parent and child, husband and wife, brother and sister, and all attached and kindred hearts, taking part in these, not to mar them with gloomy, unwelcome restraints, but to hallow and bless them, and make them forever sure and joyful. Religion would brighten and sweeten the scenes of home, by teaching and helping all eyes to wait upon and all hearts to commune with the Father that is with us all and loveth us and giveth us all good. She would make us feel his nearness and care, and rejoice and trust in them. She would give

us the piety and trust which gild the joys and soothe and sweeten the sorrows of our condition. She teaches us to repose confidently on Him who loveth and blesseth us alike in giving and in taking away.

Oh, say not, think not, that religion is the business, perhaps the drudgery, of one day, the Sabbath, to be left off with its dress and to cease with its rest. Religion is not the business of any place or time, but a companion, guide, and supporter in all. The quiet of our homes seems her favorite element. With a good and happy home her spirit seems best to accord. Its affections and duties and joys are all religious affections, religious duties, and religious joys. There the spirit of our religion (its true spirit understood and cherished) seems to be made for and linked with and necessary to our spirits; it is our spirits' life and healthful enjoyment and action. The well-ordered, well-educated, peaceful, and happy family is and must needs be, so far, a religious family. The mother must have filled her infants' breasts with good impressions and nurtured them into right and holy affections, and these are religious. The father must have labored to inspire them with right and strong principles, — integrity, industry, a love of duty, and purity of life, — and these are religious. Father and mother and children must be united, each with the other, and with all, in an affectionate and improving social harmony, and that is religious. And then affliction and sorrow must come. Death must come, and the circle be broken. Then the virtues of the dead, the sympathy of the living, the hope of reunion where change and chance come not, will give consolation, and this is religious consolation.

My friends, if you would know the meaning and worth of religion, seek it at home, cherish it there,

use, enjoy, strengthen it there; seek not the influences, the impressions, the warnings, joys, consolations of religion from the pulpit alone, but even more from the events of your homes, from the blessings and afflictions, the pleasures and griefs, of home. These, if we will listen, these speak more effectually than the voice of man, — they are the speech and appeal of God and his angels. Let religion then come and abide in your houses, by your firesides and your altars; let her bring and keep alive charity, forgiveness, kindness, and forbearance; let her reign there, and she herself shall thrive amidst your household affections, and in return shall overshadow and possess your souls, and win you to herself, and give you peace and hope and blessedness forever.

It might seem that these domestic claims and influences of religion needed no help, and allowed of no participation, and should be sacred from all intrusion from abroad. And yet custom, his situation, and the nature of his office, permit and invite one individual to a nearer communion with all. The minister of religion is permitted to be its prompter and advocate in all scenes and circumstances. If he be worthy and faithful, and have a heart warm with the spirit and eager for the service of his Master, he is received with willingness and kindness to the homes and confidence of those to whom he ministers. He is permitted to know and to sympathize with their sorrows, and to try to soothe them and make them profitable. He is permitted to know their moral wants and infirmities, and wherein he may be able to lend aid and strength. He is admitted without distance and restraint to the social intercourse of their firesides, to be glad with them and to be the helper of their joy. With him there is no conflict of

interests, no rivalries, no jealousies. Their true interests and happiness cannot be opposed to his. His people are his fathers and mothers, brothers, sisters, and children, and all these intimacies and relations, which would otherwise be an anomaly in our state of society, are justified and sanctioned by the spirit and requirements of the religion to whose service he is devoted. Such are the privileges that attach to the sacred office ; and now, my brethren, having received that office among you, it is my first desire and prayer to become worthy of and fitted for those privileges, and then to receive them freely and confidingly at your hands. Emboldened by the nature of my office, desirous to do its duties and receive its satisfactions, I ask your friendly reception and confidence in all your vicissitudes, whether joyous or grievous. When sickness shall come upon any of your number, and the world shall seem to be fading away, and death and the unseen future seem near, I desire to be admitted to his chamber, and if religion, by its prayers, its promises, its hopes and supports, can do good, as its minister I desire to speak, and if this need not be, I ask at least to be one of the friends who stand round him in silence, and commend him to God.

When the season of bereavement cometh, and your houses seem to you desolate, and hope almost dieth, and the earth is darkened and joyless, — in that hour of deep grief that cometh sooner or later to all, — if the words of the risen Saviour, the hopes full of immortality and joy which He held out, if his example, his promises, his Spirit speaking peace, full of deep, precious, holy consolation, seem to you of any worth, as his minister I would humbly help to bring them to your mind, and make them welcome and effectual ; or where this may not or need not be, I would at least offer the cordial sympathy of a friend.

When your children are growing up, and passing through the period when impressions of all kinds are readily received and take permanent effect, if then, in any degree, however humble, I can help to awaken or strengthen any in behalf of piety and virtue, I ask to be permitted to do so. If any child can be attached to religion through the person of its minister, and thus be led in the paths of purity and uprightness, and be made good and happy in himself and a blessing to you, I ask the parents' leave to coöperate with them to that end.

To these and kindred duties I desire to devote myself, yet I foresee something of the obstacles that oppose their full performance. In a society so large as this, and in times and circumstances that require such constant application to the various labors of the study, it is necessary to forego much of the satisfaction which the private duties of the ministry would, in some other cases, afford. In a society of two hundred families one's whole time would scarcely make him an intimate acquaintance with all, and in this region and this age how small a portion of time is he permitted to spare for this purpose!

There are other obstacles in the way of all the duties of the profession that cannot be forgotten, though they are not to be complained of. They arise from the infinitely sublime nature of religion and the imperfect nature of man. If the ministry of this religion could be given to an angel, whose being was pure intelligence and love holy and unbounded, how would its deep power be put forth and felt; how would its sublimities and beauties be sent in upon our souls; how would heaven be unveiled and the Father revealed, the Son believed in and loved; how would our sins be forsaken, our sorrows soothed, our joys

made pure, our affection set on heaven. How would our religion possess our souls and win them to her own ways and lead them by the still waters and the green pastures of the heavenly city. But this may not be. Infinite wisdom and love has otherwise ordained it. The infinite interests of eternity are committed to the ministry of erring lips and selfish hearts and feeble hands. Its truths and motives, its warnings and comforts, must pass through the darkened understandings of man. Man, the creature of yesterday, an instrument of clay, is set to win and to fit souls for a spiritual and eternal world, to which the teacher and the taught are alike travelers and alike need help and light. Who is sufficient for these things? Surely man cannot do them. Man, in his inexperience, feebleness, blindness, does not accomplish this great work of God. No, the Spirit of God is moving abroad upon the earth. Grace doth the work. He sendeth his angels in the events of his providence. He sendeth them in his judgments and his mercies, and these are the ministers of God and religion, — *angels do minister to men.* Man is but a feeble intrument, an humble fellow-worker in the cause which Heaven hath not forsaken, nor will forsake, — the cause of man's eternal happiness.

Brethren, I would enter upon the station which you have assigned to me amongst you with humility and yet with courage, diffident but not faint-hearted, with a just sense of the danger of this new, untried test, but without shrinking from it, looking for your candid, generous, judicious indulgence, without expecting or relying on any adventitious, groundless, unmerited partiality. Some anxious, doubting fears must always cast their shade upon the perilous and unfathomable future. And it is right and desirable

that it should be so. But notwithstanding the uncertainties and dangers of the coming future, I will enter upon it with joy and confidence and trust in God. I will believe and trust in its promises. I will look upon its brightness, and not strain my vision to discern its dark spots. The wise will say, "It is a dreamy romance; the world will disappoint you; your calling is a thankless one; your efforts will very often be fruitless, your expectations vain, your friends faithless." Be it so. When experience comes and teaches these lessons, let them be listened to with docility, and acted upon; but at present I believe it is better to be disappointed in some things than distrustful of all. It is better to be sometimes deceived than always suspicious.

The cheerful confidence with which I assume a share of the responsibilities of this office among you is heightened by circumstances which I may not now dwell upon. There is harmony of religious faith and feeling; there is good order, well and long established; there is the work begun and long continued; there are ways of duty marked out and long and well followed, tried and proved; there is counsel; there is help. To him who has sought and kindly welcomed a fellow-laborer in the vineyard which God hath intrusted to him, to him I would repeat the scriptural pledge of faithfulness, if Heaven doth bestow and continue its blessing: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried."

Brethren, let us continually unite our prayers and endeavors, that the work of the Lord may revive and flourish in the midst of us. Let the spirit of pure religion abide in and fill our homes and our individual hearts. And if the gospel of Christianity, through

the feeble agency of my ministry, shall bring one wanderer back to God, bind up one broken spirit, pour light and peace into one desponding bosom, attach one little child to things lovely and excellent, then if a consciousness of faithfulness be here, I shall cease from my labors and lie down in my grave, be it an early or a late one, with submission and peace.

III.

ORDAINING ADDRESS.

THE last ordination service in this church was in 1830. It occurred on a week-day, and occupied the entire day. There was a procession, with a band of music, an array of marshals and ushers, and a dinner or banquet at the close. A numerous council was organized of ministers and lay delegates from churches far and near. The council examined the testimonials of the candidate, and passed judgment on his fitness. Some eight or ten of its members were appointed by the body to take the several parts of the services. Of these two still survive, Drs. Dewey and Newell. If the council had not been satisfied with the candidate there would have been no ordination, unless the church or parish had taken the matter into their own hands, as they had a perfect right to do, according to the law and usage in Congregational churches. The council, however, made no difficulties.

This elaborate method of ordination was almost universal in those days, and is still widely prevalent, with various modifications and curtailments, according to the convenience or the taste of the churches.

Another method of ordination — one much observed in the early periods of New England history, and never wholly discontinued — is that by which each

church ordains its own minister by its own officers, or by one or more of its own members deputed for that duty, the minister-elect usually or frequently preaching the sermon. This method goes upon the theory, stoutly maintained by early Congregational writers, that ordination in its essence consists in the election of the minister and his acceptance, and that the ordaining service, so called, is only a public and solemn recognition of an accomplished fact.

This latter method, recommended by its primitive character and greater simplicity, has been adopted for the present occasion, and the parish authorities have authorized me to ordain my associate in their behalf, with the assistance of our friend from the university, who kindly gives us his countenance and his prayers.

By the authority of this church and society, and in their name and behalf, I ordain you, John Graham Brooks, to the work of the Christian ministry amongst us. We lay upon you the burdens and invest you with the privileges of the pastoral office. We assign to you the appropriate functions of a minister, at the baptismal font, in marriage rites, at the bier of the dead, and at the mourner's side. We place you at the commemorative table below. We commit the religious instruction of the young in the Sunday-school to your direction. We put you in possession of this pulpit for the free utterance and enforcement of the true and the right and the good, as the Spirit of God and your own diligent study shall reveal them to you.

You come as an associate minister. In that relationship I trust you will find nothing to hamper or hinder you, but rather, for a time, longer or shorter, as Providence shall order, something for your assist-

ance and relief. I will endeavor to be your helper, or, if you prefer to put it so, you shall be mine. At any rate, however we put it, there must be between you and me no clashing of aims or methods, and no separate or rival interests in anything that concerns the prosperity, harmony, and edification of this people.

We will not insult your manhood by pretending to ordain you to a life of repose on a bed of roses, or of lounging in the easy-chair of dignified leisure or graceful self-indulgence. You would justly scorn the position, if it were that, and despise yourself for accepting it. The best, the most alluring and animating thing we have to offer you is a fair field to work in; not a finished garden all rolled and swarded for dainty feet; not ripened fruit to be idly plucked, and ready to melt in your mouth; but a field, like the rest of the world, hard and rough, with stony places in it, and choking thorns sprouting or already grown here and there; a field to be tilled and mellowed and planted by the hardest toil, demanding all the work you can put upon it.

We do the best we can for you here in opening to you the opportunity for the strenuous action of all your faculties. The whole world could offer you none larger or better. And I need not remind you that if you shall do your best and utmost it will be none too much or too good for the position. And when your people, in their grateful and perhaps admiring appreciation, shall tell you how well you have done, while you will be touched with a sense of their indulgence, and cheered by a glimpse of success, it will make you feel how much better it might and ought to have been done, how far short of your ideal and your opportunity you have come; and it will

send you to your closet to think in deep but healthful humility how you shall gird up your loins for more earnest exertion and a more deserved success.

I trust there is nothing in what I am saying to alarm or depress you. On the contrary, as far as it goes, it ought to stimulate and encourage you. Do not be afraid of what is before you. Only to a weak and indolent man can it be alarming; not in the least to a resolute and earnest one.

You will find blessed furtherances and sweet encouragements at every step you take. You will find this people ready to take you at your best, and to do full justice, perhaps more than justice, to every good endeavor. They will make liberal allowances for you — all that you need at the outset. They will consider your youth, if I may judge of them by what their fathers and predecessors did in like circumstances. They will not demand of you at once all that wisdom which only the experience of life can bring, or all the weightiness which only the accumulating years can bestow. They will expect, and ought, that you will give to them, and to your work among them, not the driblets of your time, nor the dregs of a mind already fatigued by outside labors and the care of the universe at large, but the best hours of your best days, and the freshness and vigor of your unexhausted powers. They will think, as I am sure you will think, that the best contribution you can make to the interests of truth and humanity at large is work well done and diligently in this your special sphere, — a limited sphere, and yet in a sense how illimitable!

Your people will expect to see in you at once the signs of promise, of growth and strong endeavor; but for the ripened fruit they will patiently wait,

knowing, as we all know, that the best things, the things really worth having, always have to be waited for like the full corn in the ear. The puny mushroom, that a baby's hand can crush, attains its feeble perfection in a few hours; while the oak, of which navies are built, requires scores of years for its growth, and is the stronger for the suns and storms of centuries.

Meanwhile they will from the first and always give you a candid and appreciative listening. In your presentment of divine things they will agree with you when they can; and when they cannot they will do the next best thing, and pay the next best compliment — that of differing from you; and in either case they will be set a-thinking, maintaining their own independence and respecting yours, and grateful always to the man who makes them think on the great subjects. Their homes and hearts, and often their most sacred confidences, will be open to you. For any touch of sympathy you give them, in word or act, they will give you back tenfold.

In the sacred Sabbath hours they will receive with eagerness any the least light you may throw upon the problems of life, the counsels of God, and the riches of Christ. Any sentiment, lofty or tender, you shall utter here from a full heart and living conviction, will spread through all their hearts with a sweet contagion that they could not resist if they would, and would not if they could.

Any thought or word or tone of yours that shall pierce through the crust of selfishness and worldliness, which they know so well is always gathering stealthily about their consciences and hearts, and shall awaken them to generous aspirings and intents, and a sense of the sacredness of duty, and the

wealthiness of love, and the sweetness of charity, and the beauty of holiness, — they will welcome it as the Arctic voyager welcomes the returning sun, as the fields of August welcome the reviving dews. And whenever on the strong pinions of vital, fervent prayer, such as goes down to the very issues of all lives, you shall be able to lift them above themselves and away from their idols, lift yourself and them up into the realm of the eternal verities, up to the gates of heaven, up to the mercy-seat of God, and into the bosom of the Heavenly Father, they will feel it, — aye, the hardest and the coldest of them will feel it, — as a supreme benefaction, which they will gratefully remember, and perhaps the very hour of it and the place of it, as long as they live. What more or better would you have? With such opportunities and possibilities before you, you cannot be faint-hearted, but only brave and hopeful.

I might use the occasion for giving unlimited practical advice. But private occasions will serve better for that. I think it would be unseasonable and impertinent now. For it must be that at this solemn crisis of your life, at this initial point of your chosen career, — this new point of departure, for which all your previous years have been a preparation, and to which all your coming ones will be the sequel, — it must be in such an hour that your soul, all astir and aglow with the inspirations of God, is listening to wiser and holier counsels than can be written or spoken in earthly language. Now, if ever, the great aspirations from which all good things in man do proceed must be kindling, swelling, mounting within you; and those high resolves which determine life and character to noble ends are taking fixed shape and hardening into adamant. Now there comes to

you, breathed into your inner ear, the Saviour's tender and pleading question to another, with its attendant commandment: "Simon Peter, lovest thou me?" And to your inner and uplifted eye there appears, as it were, the prophet's roll, unfolding out of heaven, and written over, within and without, with soft appeals and solemn injunctions to a consecrated life and a faithful ministry. If it be so with you, that is true anointing and the effective ordination; and all else, all we can say or do, is empty form and conventionality. While the living God is thus by his great inspirations teaching you at first hand, any poor saws and maxims of ours would be but a superfluity and an interruption. While the Holy Spirit is dealing with you, a mortal man had best be silent.

I beg you, in conclusion, to accept my cordial assurances of welcome and congratulation.

Let us join hands for one moment in pledge of fellowship and brotherhood, of mutual sympathy and helpful and single-hearted coöperation.

And let me add my best wishes for the realization of the bright prospects of this hour. And let my good wishes reach beyond the purple and gold of an aspiring and hopeful youth-time, and beyond even the prosperities and successes of manhood's strong maturity. Let them stretch on to a period which you are not likely to be thinking of, but which I may well have in mind, — the far distant period when all these elders of the congregation, who are receiving you today with such parental cordiality, have become to you but a far-off, albeit an ever vivid and tender remembrance; when the strong men who gather round you now shall all have passed down the vale and out of sight; when even of your coevals but here and there one will remain, and their children and their chil-

dren's children shall constitute your flock ; and when time, the all-subduer, with a heavy yet not unkindly hand, shall have laid its weight of infirmities on yourself ; when the almond-tree shall flourish and the grasshopper shall be a burden ; when limbs and lips shall falter ; when even these pulpit stairs, that you could clear at a bound to-day, shall have become a weariness to your feet, and your voice, resonant now with the glorious vigor of youth, shall labor to reach yonder walls with its feeble tones, — when that day comes, and long and late be its coming to you, then may the good God grant you those beautiful and ample compensations which He knows so well how to provide. May He surround you with troops of loyal, life-long friends, cushion you about with sympathies and kindnesses and grateful memories, lap you softly amid the tender endearments of close and home-bound relationships, and make you even then a welcome and cherished presence in large circles of affection and pleasant companionship. May He make the twilight of your life as soft and tranquil, if not so bright, as its radiant noon. May He, as He surely can, make your last days your best days, and the end better than the beginning. This is my prayer for you. Your honored teacher at your side prays it with me, and all the people — my people, your people — are saying in their hearts, Amen.

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